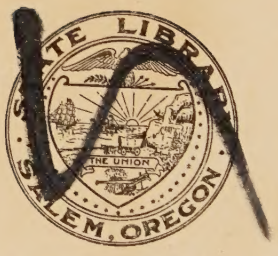
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THE GREAT ENGLISH LETTER-WRITERS

LIGHTS OF LITERATURE

THE GREAT ENGLISH LETTER-WRITERS

WITH INTRODUCTORY
ESSAYS AND NOTES

BY
WILLIAM J. DAWSON
AND
CONINGBSBY W. DAWSON

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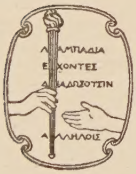
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PREFACE

THE purpose of The Reader's Library is to present in succinct form a survey of English literature. The method adopted is to assemble under generic titles the best specimens of the various branches of literature, in such a way that each volume shall be of equal service to the scholar and the general reader.

The first two volumes of the series, The Great English Letter-Writers, are now presented to the public. The selections have been carefully arranged, with a view not to chronological order so much as to the illustration of the growth of the art of letter-writing. The object of the editors has been to present what may be called a pageant-view of their theme: to show how various men and women, scattered through different ages, have borne themselves under the same crises of emotion or action. That which is obviously lost in abandoning a strictly chronological arrangement is recaptured in the introductory essays to each volume, which aim at a general historic survey of the art of letter-writing, together with a critical estimate of the writers, and of their relationship to the literature of their age. Biographical details concerning these writers are contained in the body of the volume.

Where a subject cannot be adequately treated in one volume, as is the case with The Great Letter-Writers, each volume contains a separate essay, so that it may be, as far as is possible, complete in itself.

The reader is referred to the general prospectus of the series for the plan of the entire work. Among the volumes now near completion are The Great English Essayists, The Great English Historians, and The Great English Nature-Lovers. The method adopted in the present volumes will be pursued in all succeeding volumes.

It will be noticed, no doubt, that some letter-writers of great eminence are not as adequately represented as could be wished. The reason for this inadequate representation is found in the difficulties which are involved in copyright matter. The gratitude of the editors is due, and is hereby expressed, to many publishers and authors, who have generously granted a very liberal use of copyright material. In some instances, however, the use of such material has been strictly limited.

Every care has been taken to discover the holders of copyright, and to print nothing without express permission. In some cases, however, the editors have been unable to trace the owner. Should any letter be found in these volumes for which permission should have been gained, the editors beg to state that the error is not wilful, and they offer their apologies to the undiscovered owners of the copyright.

To the following publishers and authors, who have extended their courtesy to the Editors, by allowing the use of copyright material contained in these two volumes, a word of grateful acknowledgment is due:—To Messrs. G. P. Putnam's Sons for Mr. and Mrs. Borrow's letter, from Professor Knapp's *Life of Borrow,* copyright 1899; to Messrs. Dodd, Mead & Company for the correspondence of Charlotte Brontë, from Mr. Clement K. Shorter's *The Brontës and Their Circle,* copyright 1896; to Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Company for the letters of Elizabeth and Robert Browning, from Mrs. Sutherland Orr's

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The Development of English Letter-Writing

THE history of letter-writing if it could be adequately written would form one of the most fascinating records of the progress of the human race; but in the present condition of our knowledge any history that could be called adequate is impossible. The tendency of modern discovery is to push further and yet further back the use of those methods of intercourse which we have been accustomed to regard as characteristic of forms of life relatively modern. The ruins of Pompeii have furnished us, among other things, with specimens of bronze pens which may vie with the best productions of modern manufacture in their workmanship, skill, and usefulness. From the tombs of Egypt have come to us countless evidences of the social life of the people, among which are tradesmen's bills and domestic missives. It is not impossible that some future discoverer may be able to present to the world the love-letters of the Pharaohs, or the private journals of Moses written in the hours when he meditated his great revolt, and was aware of the first shadow of his approaching destiny.

According to Wolf, in his *Prolegomena ad Homerum,* the art of writing was introduced into Greece about 1100 B.C.[1] It seems certain that the sixth book of the Iliad was composed without writing; that is, it was purely oral,

[1] Dr. Angelo Mosso, in his recently published work upon The Palaces of Crete and Their Builders, states that the Cretan linear writing extends back a thousand years before the earliest known appearance of the Phœnician alphabet, while the early pictorial form

in much the same way that the Gospels of Jesus long existed in oral forms before they were recorded in writing. Just as the first Apostles repeated what they remembered or had collected of the sayings and the deeds of Jesus, so the sixth book of the Iliad was kept in memory by the Rhapsodists, who recited it upon great occasions, at feasts and festivals. There was this difference, however: while the disciples of Jesus lived in an age of literature, whose forms and means were accessible the moment they chose to use them, to the early Greek Rhapsodists, writing was an unknown and even fearful art. It was to their generation what Alchemy and Astrology were to the Middle Ages, a thing of awe, often used for the carrying out of dark purposes.

In the sixth book of the Iliad we have the first mention of the letter in Greek literature. The story runs thus.

To Bellerophon, son of Glaukos, did the gods grant beauty and lovely manhood. Against him did King Proitos devise evil in his heart and did drive him out from the land of the Argives, being mightier by far than he. It happened on this wise. Anteia, wife of Proitos, lusted after Bellerophon, even as did Potiphar's wife after Joseph in the land of Egypt; but because of the righteousness that was in his heart no whit could she prevail upon him. Then spake she lyingly unto the king, saying, "Die thyself, O Proitos, or else slay me Bellerophon, for he would lead me aside in love against my will."

Then was the king angry when he heard it; yet to slay him he did forbear, for his soul had shame of such a deed. So he sent him to Lykia and gave him *tokens of woe, writing upon a folded tablet of many deadly things, and*

dates a thousand years earlier than the linear. It has been commonly supposed that it was the Phœnicians who introduced the art of writing into Greece.

bade him show these to Anteia's father that he might be slain.[1]

All ignorant of his danger Bellerophon departed upon his way. When he came to Lykia, then did the king of that country honour him with all his heart; nine days did he feast him and nine oxen did he kill. On the tenth day, when rosy-fingered dawn did shine, he questioned him and asked to see what manner of guest-tokens he bore from his son-in-law, even Proitos. Now when the king of Lykia had seen the evil tokens which he carried, he strove to murder him in four separate and secret ways. But when he saw that by none of these means might he prevail, he at last came to recognise that Bellerophon was the doughty offspring of an immortal god. So he plighted him his daughter in marriage and gave unto him the half of his kingdom, fair with vineyards and flowery meads.

This passage is of the highest interest, and curiously resembles another incident, much better known, which is recorded in the second book of Samuel. Bellerophon is the victim of treachery. He goes to his supposed doom, carrying with him a guest-token, which instead of assuring for him the honours of hospitality has written upon it the warrant for his murder. David acts in precisely the same manner toward Uriah the Hittite. He will not slay Uriah himself, because Uriah has eaten of his bread. He feasts Uriah and makes him drunk, as the dark preface of his perfidy. "And it came to pass in the morning that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah. And he wrote in the letter, saying, set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten and die." The guest tablet of the unconscious

[1] πέμπε δέ μιν Λυκίηνδε, πόρεν δ' ὅ γε σήματα λυγρά,
γράψας ἐν πίνακι πτυκτῷ θυμοφθόρα πολλά.
—Iliad, Bk. VI., lines 168 and 9.

Bellerophon, and the letter which the unsuspecting Uriah carries in his bosom, are meant to play the same part; by a refinement of cruelty each victim is made the messenger of his own disaster. It is thus a curious fact that the first two letters mentioned in literature are letters of treachery. The tragedy of Uriah the Hittite may be dated at about 1035 B.C.; probably this use of the letter by Homer belongs to about the same period. In each instance the letter plays an evil part and is the instrument of dark purposes.

One can easily conceive how, in a primitive age, the mysterious art of communication by secret symbols would be regarded with suspicion and dislike by ordinary men. The transmission of thought by means of lines scratched upon a leaf or a tablet would seem not less wonderful to the men of Homer's day than would wireless telegraphy to the innocent savage of the Pacific Islands. But as the new method of communication was better understood its use became general and popular. When we come to the Roman era we find letter-writing fully established as one of the indispensable conveniences of life, and the century which preceded the Christian era produced one of the greatest of all letter-writers, Marcus Tullius Cicero.

The extant correspondence of Cicero dates from the year 68 B.C. when he was thirty-nine years old. More than eight hundred of his letters have been preserved, of which number four hundred were addressed to Atticus, than whom no man ever had a more sympathetic and generous friend. In these letters we see Cicero in his habit as he lived. We see him in his strength and in his weakness, a man bold in thought but vacillating in action, brilliant and unstable, loving public life but never wholly absorbed in it, resenting retirement when it is compulsory, and yet never so truly happy as when he forgets the world, and is at home among his flowers and books in one of his sequestered

villas. He writes with equal grace of the condition of public affairs and the small domestic details of his life. His letters on public affairs constitute the best contemporary history of his times, and console us for the loss of the more elaborate history which he is known to have composed. He enables us to see the causes which led to the fate of the Republic, and we share his own agitation and dismay as the grim tragedy proceeds. But in the midst of the advancing shadows he remains detached if not serene, and finds his refuge in the calm pursuits of scholarship. His passion for books was among the strongest passions of his life. He says that a house without a library is a body without a soul. We find him in his letters to Atticus expressing delight over the gay appearance of the parchment-covers in which his rolls were kept, asking the loan of two librarians to glue his parchments together and make an index, and beseeching Atticus on no account to part with his library, for he, Cicero, hopes to purchase it from him, and find in it the resource of his old age. From the lamentable spectacle of public affairs, which inspires in him only disappointment and disgust, he turns with relief to the pleasures of his pen, saying that he is always able to find refreshment in literature, and that he would rather sit in a well-known seat in his friend's country house, with the bust of Aristotle over his head, than in a curule chair. This was by no means his constant mood, but it is a frequent mood, and shows him in his most engaging aspect. In this mood he envies neither Cæsar his triumphs, nor Crassus his wealth. He finds consolation for a hundred disappointments in the cultivation of friendship and philosophy; and he realises those conditions which Dr. Johnson said were necessary to the production of a good letter, "the cool of leisure, the stillness of solitude."

The charm of these letters is manifold. The scholar will praise their exquisite Latinity, the man of letters will regard them as masterpieces of expression, the thinker will value them for their philosophic clearness and range of vision, the statesman and historian for their definite contribution to his knowledge of affairs. Great as these qualities are, there is, however, a greater yet, which must always attract the ordinary reader who is unable to appreciate either the delicacies of style or the value of philosophic ideas. This quality may be best described as the human touch. It is surprising how modern many of these letters sound; both as regards their subject-matter and their expression they might have been written yesterday. So fresh, so natural, so intimate are they, that it is often impossible to imagine that more than nineteen centuries have passed away since they were written, and that the Empire of glory and of crime reflected in their pages has itself left not a wrack behind. It is the human note in these letters which produces this fortunate illusion. Cicero gossips freely of his private affairs, his financial embarrassments, his difficulty in recovering his loans, his disappointments with people he has trusted, his annoyances from stupid and intrusive neighbours, the repairs necessary to his house property, the newest scandal and the last dinner party; these, and a hundred other incidents of his daily life. His love for his daughter, little Tullia, or Tulliola as he often calls her, runs like a strain of music through all these familiar epistles, and his anguish over her death is terrible. He tells us that he is blind with tears as he writes. He is a man always craving for sympathy, and incapable of being separated from the persons and objects which he loves, even for a short time, without genuine misery. Italy he loves with a profound affection. He cannot make up his mind to leave her shores even when the security of his own life

demands the sacrifice. His letters written in exile are full of the most poignant pathos. And it is because he writes so frequently upon things which enter more or less into all human lives, the homely and the tragic things, thus striking the great common chords of humanity, that his letters have achieved a popularity which no others in the history of literature have attained. They still remain solitary in their charm, and incomparable in their excellence.

This is neither the occasion nor the place to give examples of these early and classic letters; but one may be appended both for its great historic interest, and as an illustration of the frankness and intimacy of Cicero's method. It is a letter to Atticus, in which he describes how he entertained Julius Cæsar.

"O this visitor so much dreaded! And yet one whose visit I am not sorry to have received; for it went off most pleasantly.

"When we came the evening before, on the 18th, to my neighbour Philippus, the house was so crowded with soldiers, that there was hardly a vacant room for Cæsar to sup in. There were about two thousand of them, which made me feel no little uneasiness for the next day. But Barba Cussius set me at ease. He assigned me a guard; made the rest encamp in the fields; so that my house was kept clear. On the 19th, he staid with Philippus till one o'clock but admitted nobody. He was settling accounts, as I suppose, with Balbus. He then walked by the shore to my house. At two he took the bath. The verses on Mamuna were then read to him. His countenance was unchanged. He was rubbed, and anointed, and then he disposed himself at table, after taking an emetic; and ate and drank in a very free and easy manner; for he was en-

tertained hospitably and elegantly; and our discourse resembled our repast in its relish and seasoning.

"Besides Cæsar's table, his attendants were well provided for in three other rooms; nor was there any deficiency in the provision made for his freedmen of lower quality, and his slaves; but those of the better sort were elegantly entertained. Need I add more. I acted as man with man. Yet he was not the man to whom one would say at parting, 'I pray let me have this visit repeated when you come this way again.' Once is enough. Not a word passed between us on business, but much literary talk. To make short of the matter, he was perfectly pleased and easy. He talked of spending one day at Puteoli; another at Baiæ. You have thus the account of the day's entertainment—an entertainment not agreeable, but still not troublesome to me. I shall stay here a little longer, and then to Tusculum.

"As he passed by Dolabella's villa, his troop marched close by the side of this house, on the right and left; which was done nowhere else.

"I had this from Nicias."

The reason why it has been necessary to give so much consideration to these letters of Cicero, which were written at a time when Britain was first invaded by the Romans, is that for many centuries the Roman speech was not only the written, but also very frequently the spoken, medium of the cultured classes of every European nation, and that his letters attain to the highest excellence of Latin epistolary style. It must be remembered that throughout the Middle Ages the Latin language was the common means of intercommunication between the peoples of the Western world. It was the language of travellers, students, statesmen, as well as of business correspondence, occupying just such a position as French holds throughout Europe to-day;

or, better still, such as Esperanto enthusiasts claim for their invented tongue—that of a speech which is international. So late as Elizabeth's reign Latin was a familiar epistolary medium between brother Englishmen. Many of Ascham's letters (1515-1568) and of John Lyly's (1553 or 4-1606) are written in the classic tongue. Up to a much later date it retained its place as the language of science and diplomacy; Milton, as we all know, was Latin secretary to Cromwell.

One of the most memorable events of the Italian Revival of Learning was the discovery by Petrarch at Vercelli of Cicero's letters "Ad Familiares," a copy of which, made in Petrarch's own handwriting, is still extant. In the year 1345 he also brought to light at Verona a copy of the letters "Ad Atticum" and "Ad Quintum Fratrem," the originals of which are now lost.

To what extent these discoveries in their entirety were known to cultured Englishmen, it is not possible to say. Since the Latin classics were the school wherein England learnt her first great lesson in the epistolary art and Cicero was the supreme master of that art, whether or no his correspondence was familiar to the men of the Tudor Age, at which period English itself became a medium of classic utterance, matters relatively little. The formative influence of his letters, felt indirectly at least through the writings of his own later countrymen, had been communicated by a long line of mediæval scholars, and therefore must always claim a large place in the history of the development of English letter-writing.

With the name of Cicero must be joined another great name, that of St. Paul, who wrote a century later. A large portion of the New Testament itself consists of Epistles, written originally in the Greek tongue, but for many centuries much more widely known in Latin translations.

These letters had the same kind of literary influence upon the ecclesiastic writers that Cicero's letters had upon the secular. Augustine and Jerome, Chrysostom, and Basil, and many other fathers of the Church are the authors of letters of great historic interest, all written in the Latin tongue and owing their literary method to the letters of St. Paul.

The larger and more important Epistles of St. Paul are obviously not in the strict sense letters; they are treatises in theology, arguments against heresy, and promulgations of a new social order, which were meant for oral publication. The same criticism which dismisses from the category of true letters many of the epistles of Ruskin, because they are obviously essays, nominally addressed to individuals, but really to the whole world, operates against the larger Epistles of St. Paul. Nevertheless, in the concluding parts of these epistles—the postscripts as we should call them—St. Paul adopts the spontaneous method of domestic and familiar letters. The last chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, for example, is a series of encomiums on absent friends and of warm-hearted messages to them. He speaks with grateful tenderness of Priscilla and Aquila, "who for my life laid down their necks"; of Mary, "who bestowed much labour on us"; of Andronicus and Junia, "my kinsmen and my fellow-prisoners"; of Rufus, "chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine." "His mother and mine,"—here we have a most suggestive glimpse of the human side of the great apostle, his need of friendship, his true lovableness, and the warmth and depth of that affection which his converts felt for him, which no doubt consoled him in the bitterness of loneliness and exile. This is precisely the intimate and confidential note which we find in all good letters, and it is a most interesting revelation of personality.

There is, however, one Epistle of St. Paul, undoubtedly genuine, which entirely conforms to the canons of the true letter, the brief Epistle to Philemon. The date of this letter is 58 to 60 A.D. It is addressed to Philemon, and is an appeal to him on behalf of Onesimus, his runaway slave, who has become a Christian. Paul states that he had learned to love Onesimus as his "very heart," his "child begotten in his bonds." He pleads with Philemon to treat him "no longer as a slave, but as a beloved brother in the Lord." He finally offers to reimburse Philemon for any loss he may have suffered by the conduct of Onesimus; reminding Philemon, however, that he himself is a debtor; "I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self." Paul is careful to add that his communication is written with his own hand, as any letter of an intimate and domestic nature should be. Here we have then an authentic letter by a great man which is of the highest interest, not only for its personal revelation, but also as a chronicle of the spirit and manners of his time. We are made aware of the kindliness and consideration of Paul's nature, his delicacy, tact, and courtesy, in a position of some difficulty; we also get a vivid glimpse of the social conditions of the time, the thoughts and feelings of Onesimus, the implied magnanimity of Philemon, and the spirit of brotherliness which characterised the household of which he was the head. Judged from the merely literary point of view, we may say with Professor McGiffert that this "brief note is one of the most charming things of the kind ever written." [1]

The development of the epistolary art in England was extremely slow. For this there are a variety of reasons,

[1] *A History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age*, by Arthur Cushman McGiffert, Ph.D., D.D. (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.)

chief among which is that not until the fourteenth century did England feel herself to be a united nation or attain to a oneness of national speech.

Saxon England was divided into four separate kingdoms, each speaking its own language and bitterly opposed to its kinsman neighbours. These were the realms of Wessex, Mercia, East Anglia, and Northumberland. To the westward, in the lands of Strathclyde, Wales, and the peninsula which is now called Cornwall, abode the Welsh, who were at enmity with all four invader kingdoms. These five peoples were forever at war. For the writing of letters there are two prime requisites—peace and a settled unity of language. Both of these were lacking. With the coming of the Danes in the ninth century a new cause of strife and a fresh difference of speech was introduced. When the Danish dynasty was overthrown and Edward the Confessor (1042-1066) put on the crown England gained little in nationality. He had lived from his youth in exile at the court of Normandy, and had been recalled too late in life ever to enter fully into Saxon sympathies, or to accomplish the strong man's task of welding the diverse elements of which his subjects were composed into one great people. With the coming of William the Norman all things Saxon sank into disgrace; English became the despised language of the conquered. French and Latin were the speech of gentry. Saxon was the speech of vulgar folk and of serfs. To speak Saxon was a reproach. Almost all our writers from Bæda to the Angevins are clergy or monks. The Church in England was now in the power of the conquerors, therefore the literature which it created was in the conquerors' tongue. The philosophical impulse imported by Anselm into England produced no English work of theology or metaphysics. Turgot and Simeon of Durham used Latin for the writing of the

national annals to the time of Henry the First. Only as the writings of men who once dwelt in England can the French and Latin works of these two and a half centuries be reckoned as a part of English literature. Even the English Chronicle, that great monument of the race, which had progressed unbrokenly from the reign of Alfred throughout the troublous Norman days, came to an abrupt close with the death of Stephen in 1154. With the gradual loss of continental possessions the purposes of the Norman and Saxon came to be one, with unity of purpose came nationality, and with nationality the need of a national tongue.

In 1258 the first royal proclamation in English since the Conquest was made. Little by little, despite the efforts of grammar schools and the glamour of fashion, English overcame the courtly French. "Children in school," complains a writer of the age, "against the usage and manner of all other nations, be compelled for to leave their own language, and for to construe their lessons and their things in French, and so they have since the Normans first came to England. Also gentlemen's children be taught to speak French from the time that they be rocked in their cradle, and know not how to speak and play with a child's toy; and uplandish [or country] men will liken themselves to gentlemen, and *strive with great busyness to speak French for to be more told of.*" There, in those last few words, lies the secret of the situation: if men would appear before the world as gentlemen, they must speak French. If a risen man would seek release from the humble environments of his birth, he must speak French. To speak French was necessary to good-breeding, or even to the pretence of it.

With the commencement of the Hundred Years' War, however, the national spirit grew up, and with it the feel-

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ing that French was the language of our enemies across the Channel, and that the Saxon was our proper tongue. At last the grammar schools gave way, so that it was possible for a man of Richard the Second's reign to write, "Now, in the year of our Lord, 1385, in all the grammar schools of England children leaveth French, and construeth and learneth in English." A more formal note of the change is found when English was ordered to be used in the courts of law in 1362, "because the French tongue is much unknown." Bishops began to preach in English, and the English tracts of Wyclif made it once more a literary tongue. "Let clerks indite in Latin," says the author of the "Testament of Love," "and let Frenchmen in their French also indite their quaint terms, for it is kindly to their mouths; and let us show our fantasies in such words as we learned of our mother's tongue." So at last England had gained a language of her own, albeit formerly it had been the speech of serfs, and Englishmen were not ashamed to own it as the language which *"they had learned of their mother's tongue."* Pride in nationality and pride in a national speech had at last come. Chaucer (1340-1400) was the first notable achievement of this new movement; he made English a fashionable literary medium of expression for his age, whereas heretofore it had been Latin or French. This flame-like renaissance of a truly national literature was, however, suddenly quenched by the hundred years of unrest and civil strife which followed. Not until Caxton (1422?-1491?) in 1474 had put through the press at Bruges the first book printed in the English tongue, the Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye, and not until two years later he had set up his wooden printing press at the sign of the Red Pale in the Almonry at Westminster, did the onward march of English as a literary language commence again. Caxton was not only a printer, he was a fluent translator, and

more than four thousand of his printed pages are from works of his own rendering. His greatest difficulties arose from the unsettled state of the language. In his own words he tells us, "Some honest and great clerks have been with me and desired me to write the most curious terms that I could find." And again, "Some gentlemen of late blamed me, saying, that in my translations I had over many curious terms which could not be understood of common people, and desired me to use old and homely terms in my translations." Troubles came to him not only through the critical choice which he was called upon to exercise between rude plain English and the scholarly pedantries of his age, but also from the varying dialects which were in common use throughout the land, no one of which could be said to be vulgar or inaccurate when as yet there was no recognised standard of grammatical correctness established. "Common English that is spoken in one shire varieth from another so much, that in my days it happened that certain merchantmen were in a ship in Thames, for to have sailed over sea into Zealand, and for lack of wind they tarried at Foreland, and went on land for to refresh them. And one of them, named Sheffield, a mercer, came into a house and asked for meat, and especially he asked them after eggs. And the good wife answered that she could not speak French. And the merchant was angry for he also could speak no French, but would have had eggs, but she understood him not. And then at last another said he would have *eyren,* then the good wife understood him well. Lo! what should a man in these days now write," asks the bewildered printer, "eggs or eyren? Certainly it is hard to please every man by cause of diversity and change of language." Moreover the language was changing year by year, so that men's daily speech was in "a state of rapid flux." "Our language now

used, varieth far from that which was used and spoken when I was born."

When the grammatical forms of the language were unestablished and no standard of orthography had been set up, it is little to be wondered at that cultured men preferred to conduct their correspondence in Latin, which was subject to no innovations, every outward symbol of which was stereotyped and understood.

For this reason our first selection from the correspondence of Great English Letter-writers, is made from that of Edmund Spenser (1552?-1599). It is true that the Paston Letters (1422-1509) antedate this, covering as they do almost the whole of the fifteenth century, but they hardly come within the scope of this work, which deals as far as possible only with published letters. They were not published until three centuries later when they fell into the hands of Sir John Fenn, who edited a selection in two quartos in 1787. Bishop Hall (1574-1656) technically holds first claim to the earliest publication of epistles in the English Language, only his epistles do not appear to have been genuine letters which were ever sent to any individual in particular, they are only artificialities—literary forms. "Further," he says in his Dedication to Prince Henry when he explains his aims, "which these times account not in the least praise, your Grace shall herein perceive a new fashion of discourses by Epistles, new to our language; usual to all others: and so as novelty is never without plea of use, more free, more familiar. Thus we do but talk with our friends by our pen, and express ourselves no whit less easily; somewhat more digestedly."

James Howell (1594?-1666) in his *Epistolæ Ho-Elianæ*, or Familiar Letters, which he printed in 1645 whilst he lay a Royalist prisoner in the Fleet, carried the history of Eng-

lish Letter-writing one step further. His letters, if not altogether genuine, are nearly so. They are dated from various places at home and abroad; and though many of them must have been compiled from memory, and all of them elaborately edited, the greater number seem to bear sufficient internal evidence of having been written in the main at the times and places indicated. They are not at all the sort of letter which we of to-day should call "familiar." Most of them, if the opening and closing passages were removed, would pass for very fair essays or sermons.

Not until Pope (1688-1744) did the private letter, as a means of published literary expression, begin to assume its present form. In 1737, Pope published, by subscription, a volume of letters between himself and his literary friends. Part of the collection had been previously issued by Curll, the notorious publisher of that day, to whom Pope had, by the agency of other parties, conveyed an edition privately printed. Having induced Curll to advertise the volume as containing letters of certain noblemen, the publisher was summoned before the House of Lords for breach of privilege. When it was examined, it was found to contain no single letter from any nobleman; therefore Curll was dismissed. Pope now made this his excuse for putting forth a genuine collection, having by these means secured a magnificent advertisement and made certain of a large sale. In reality there was little difference between the two editions, Pope having prepared them both. Some of the letters therein contained certainly had no place in an actual correspondence; many, perhaps most, of them had. The experiment of publishing letters was new to the public of Pope's day. Dr. Johnson says of it, "Pope's epistolary excellence had an open field; he had no English rival, living or dead." This, then, was the first English attempt to

interest the public in the private and familiar friendships of literary men by way of their published letters.

Pope's great contribution to the development of English Letter-writing was that his volume, whether spurious or genuine, certainly did contain that friendly personal note without which no letter is complete to-day.

From this point we find the letter firmly established as a mode of literary expression. There still remained, however, many difficulties and hindrances of a mechanical nature in the course of its development. One of these was the expense of materials. In the Middle Ages almost all letters were written on parchment. In Charles Reade's great novel, *The Cloister and the Hearth,* we are repeatedly reminded of the value of parchment and of the difficulty which the poor scholars had in procuring it. We know now that many ancient writings, some of them probably of priceless value, were defaced, in order that the parchments on which they were written might be used by the industrious scribes of the Renaissance. The manufacture of paper put an end to this form of literary sacrilege, but for a long period paper was expensive, and its prodigal employment in correspondence was impossible to any but persons of considerable means.

A more serious difficulty was the insecurity and inconvenience of transit. Cicero constantly complains that he can find no trustworthy messenger to convey his letters to Atticus. In one of his letters he describes how a letter is handed to him on his travels. It was before daybreak; it was yet dark, and he and his party had no lights. He had therefore to wait for the rising of the sun to read the letter. It is a matter for marvel that so many of Cicero's letters safely reached their destination, for the times were troublous, the roads were infested by bandits, and it was at no time easy to discover a trustworthy messenger. The same

conditions prevailed in England, though of course not in the same degree, as late as the seventeenth century, and even later. The first letter-post in the modern acceptation of the term, was established in the Hanse towns in the early part of the thirteenth century. The first English inland post was established by Charles the First. The time occupied for the transit of a letter between England and Scotland was six days. In 1708 an attempt was made to establish a half-penny post in London, but this bold innovation was at once suppressed at the instance of the Government.

The institution of mail-coaches in 1783 for the first time made a general system of correspondence possible. But there still remained the question of expense, which led to a wholesale system of fraud upon the Post-office. The members of both the House of Commons and the House of Lords had the right of franking as many letters as they pleased, and also of receiving free of cost all letters addressed to themselves.[1] This privilege was notoriously abused. One member of Parliament is reported to have received no less than three hundred pounds a year from a great mercantile house for franking its correspondence. The Government complained that it lost not less than the enormous sum of £170,000 per annum by these methods. It will be readily seen that under conditions such as these the general practice of letter-writing was not likely to thrive; for to the poor man, who had no influential friend to frank his correspondence, the mere expense of transit was prohibitory.

There was an even greater difficulty in the absence of confidence. Not only was the mail-coach constantly robbed, but letters were frequently opened by spies in the

[1] The material for this and the subsequent paragraphs is derived from the pages of Mr. Lecky's *History of the Eighteenth Century.*

pay of political parties, or by other persons who had their own ends to serve. We have a curious instance of this insecurity of correspondence in the history of Massachusetts in 1769. Hutchinson, the Governor-General of Massachusetts, was in the habit of communicating the affairs of the province to Whately, and of commenting on them with the greatest freedom. He dilated upon the turbulent spirit of Boston, the truculent character of the local agitators, and the necessity for a strong military force to support the Government. In one of his letters he argues boldly for an abridgment of the Colonial liberties. These letters, written with the freedom of confidential communications, fell into the hands of Benjamin Franklin, who at once proceeded to make them public. Franklin, who was then an old man of sixty-seven, the greatest philosopher America had produced, and the accredited representative of the Colonies, was violently censured for his defect of honour and heard himself denounced by the most prominent members of the British Government as a thief and the accomplice of thieves. Upon the moral aspects of this incident comment is unnecessary, but it illustrates on a large scale the perils of correspondence in periods of political unrest. No one is likely to write a confidential letter unless he can be reasonably sure that he does so under the seal of privacy. Insecurity of confidence must always prove fatal to the practice of letter-writing.

The importance of this consideration can hardly be overestimated. Swift, Bolingbroke, Marlborough, and Pope are loud in their complaints about the insecurity of their private correspondence. Walpole himself, when he was Prime Minister, made no scruple of opening the letters of a political rival. In such an age no man could be sure that his most private communication with a friend might not be made public, or that the witty censures and just criti-

cisms which he allowed himself to utter in the freedom of a confidential letter might not be used against him as weapons of insult and enmity. Thus, even Pope, when he made his daring experiment of publishing a volume of letters, was careful to edit them to avoid giving offence. There can be little doubt that in editing he emasculated them. Compared with the familiar letters of such a writer as Stevenson, they are tame and dull productions. The difference lies not only in the temperament of the two men, but still more in the fact that Stevenson wrote in complete security, saying what he would with unrestrained freedom. He knew, at all events, that his correspondence would not be tampered with, and without that conviction he could not have written at all. No writer of Pope's day could be sure of this; and hence Pope's letters miss that perfectly free and familiar note which is the charm of Stevenson.

So then, among the most real hindrances to the growth of English letter-writing must be enumerated not only those which belong to the slow settlement of the language and its gradual rise into appreciation, but those mechanical hindrances which lay in expensive and imperfect transit, and the insecurity of confidence. But as we follow the course of history, we see these difficulties more and more in process of dissolution. The country becomes settled, the means of communication are improved, the cost of transit is cheapened, education becomes more general, the population increases, and with it the paramount need for efficient modes of correspondence, until in the year 1840 Rowland Hill's great scheme of a uniform penny post in Great Britain is adopted. Previous to the adoption of the Penny Post the charges of transit upon letters had been regulated by distance, ranging from fourpence for a twenty-mile limit, to a shilling for a three-hundred mile. From the moment

that the Penny Post was adopted the country became really one closely knit social unit. The shepherd on the Cheviots was able to communicate with his son in London at a less expense than it had previously cost him to send a message to the nearest neighbouring hamlet. The more remote shires of England, where life and thought had been sluggish, were brought into immediate touch with the metropolitan centres, and bound to them by a thousand new and delicate filaments of intelligence and sympathy. Quiet people, living isolated lives in rustic solitudes, suddenly became citizens of the world. Literary men, statesmen, and politicians were able to communicate their ideas over distances which had once seemed intolerably vast, at a trifling cost, and with the certainty that the privacy of their communications would be respected. Letter-writing, once the privilege of the learned or wealthy few, became a universal occupation. Finally, literature itself entered on a period of unexampled expansion, and a thousand rapid and delightful impressions, hitherto reserved for the printed page, or more probably allowed to perish, found their way into those familiar epistles which are our surest source of knowledge concerning our greatest writers.

It has often been contended that "the conditions of modern life are generally unfavourable to the production of letters of the best class," and it is usual to add that among the modern enemies of letter-writing the Penny Post ranks the chief. The very reverse of this statement appears to be the truth. The means of performance made performance possible. It is true, no doubt, that when a multitude of persons practise any art much will be produced that is ephemeral, trivial, and unnoticeable; but it is also certain that a much larger proportion of creditable, and even excellent work will appear than in the days when the very knowledge of the art was the privilege of the few. This is abundantly

true of letter-writing. Many volumes of letters are published to-day, and forgotten, which, had they appeared a century ago, would have attracted world-wide attention by their vivacity, their wit, their pathos, their human interest, and their literary merit. The art of letter-writing, instead of being a decaying art, is precisely one of those forms of literary expression in which growth and progress are most clearly visible. Nor is it safe to assume that the increased speed and intensity of modern life constitute a real hindrance to letter-writing. On the contrary, they are often an incentive. A man of genuine parts, who has no time in which to write the serious essay, often finds in the letter the exact vehicle which he requires for the expression of fugitive moods and thoughts, which are not the less valuable or suggestive because they are fugitive. Moreover, there is good ground to believe that the general rise in comfort and competence, incident on the wider distribution of wealth in society, is constantly producing a leisured class, far more numerous than in any other era of the world. The same cause is also producing persons of more sensitive taste, interested in a wide range of subjects, capable of expressing their thoughts and emotions with skill and adequacy, and eager to impart them, if not to the general public, at least to the circle of their intimate acquaintances. To these must be added the genuine practitioners of literature, now a great host, who are too thoroughly aware of the value of the epistolary art ever to discard it. We may therefore conclude that while it is impossible to regard some forms of literature without the backward look of regret for a glory that has diminished with the years, the published letter is not one of these. Here we find not decadence, but advancement; not the finer form of art giving place to the baser, but a constantly increasing range of achievement. The best letters of modern times are worthy to be ranked with the best let-

ters of any time; for it would be affectation in those who admire Walpole and Cowper not to admit that in many essential qualities of art and workmanship these writers are fully equalled, and indeed surpassed, by FitzGerald and Stevenson, by Keats and by Carlyle.

I

Tribulations of Genius

An untimely philanthropist.

Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774)

A poet appeals to a statesman to save him from starvation.

George Crabbe (1754-1832)

A dreamer complains that he is forced to write for bread.

S. T. Coleridge (1772-1834)

Elia is repentant.

Charles Lamb (1775-1835)

Genius in obscurity: Jane Eyre in real life.

Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855)

The cock that refused to be silenced.

Jane Welsh Carlyle (1801-1866)

The dog that would bark.

Jane Welsh Carlyle (1801-1866)

The penalties of fame: sample of the correspondence which is addressed to a prophet of his age.

To Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881)

An Untimely Philanthropist

Oliver Goldsmith to Ralph Griffiths[1]

January, 1759.

Sir,—

I know of no misery but a jail to which my own imprudences and your letter seem to point. I have seen it inevitable these three or four weeks, and, by heavens! request it as a favour—as a favour that may prevent something more fatal. I have been some years struggling with a wretched being—with all that contempt and indigence bring with it—with all those passions which make contempt insupportable. What, then, has a jail that is formidable? I shall at least have the society of wretches, and such is to me true society. I tell you again and again, that I am neither able nor willing to pay you a farthing, but I will be punctual to any appointment you or the tailor shall make; thus far, at least, I do not act the sharper, since, unable to pay my own debts one way, I would generally give some security another. No, sir; had I been a sharper

[1] Goldsmith, desiring to pass his medical examination at the College of Physicians, had found himself unable to appear before the examining body through lack of respectable clothes and the wherewithal to buy them. In consideration of four articles supplied to the *Monthly Review*, its proprietor, Griffiths, had become his security to the tailor, Goldsmith having stated that he required the garments only for use upon a single occasion, after which they would be either returned or paid for. On these conditions books for the reviews were lent to him and the suit was provided. On December 21, 1758, he underwent his examination and failed. On Christmas Day his landlady, to whom he owed arrears of rent, appeared before him crying, begging him to

—had I been possessed of less good nature and native generosity, I might surely now have been in better circumstances.

I am guilty, I own, of meannesses which poverty unavoidably brings with it: my reflections are filled with repentance for my imprudence, but not with any remorse for being a villain; that may be a character you unjustly charge me with. Your books, I can assure you, are neither pawned nor sold, but in the custody of a friend, from whom my necessities obliged me to borrow some money: whatever becomes of my person, you shall have them in a month. It is very possible both the reports you have heard, and your own suggestions, may have brought you false information with respect to my character; it is very possible that the man whom you now regard with detestation may inwardly burn with grateful resentment. It is very possible that, upon a second perusal of the letter I sent you, you may see the workings of a mind strongly agitated with gratitude and jealousy. If such circumstances should appear, at least spare invective till my book with Mr. Dodsley shall be published, and then, perhaps, you may see the bright side of a mind, when my professions shall not appear the dictates of necessity, but of choice.

pay her since her husband had the night before been arrested for debt and thrown into prison. In his compassion, Goldsmith pawned the fatal clothes and so released his landlord. Being himself in actual want, he borrowed a pittance from a neighbour, leaving with him the books as security. At this crisis he received an angry note from Griffiths, who had discovered the suit in a pawnbroker's shop, demanding an immediate return of both clothes and books or payment for the same. Goldsmith's first answer is lost. The above letter was sent in reply to a second epistle from Griffiths, wherein he had used the epithets of knave and sharper, and had threatened this unthrifty philanthropist with prosecution and gaol.

You seem to think Dr. Milner knew me not. Perhaps so; but he was a man I shall ever honour; but I have friendships only with the dead! I ask pardon for taking up so much time; nor shall I add to it by any other professions than that I am, sir, your humble servant,

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

PS.—I shall expect impatiently the result of your resolutions.

A POET APPEALS TO A STATESMAN TO SAVE HIM FROM STARVATION

I

George Crabbe to Edmund Burke

[*No date, but written early in* 1781.]

SIR,—

I am sensible that I need even your talents to apologise for the freedom I now take; but I have a plea which, however simply urged, will, with a mind like yours, Sir, procure me pardon: I am one of those outcasts on the world, who are without a friend, without employment, and without bread. Pardon me a short preface. I had a partial father, who gave me a better education than his broken fortune would have allowed; and a better than was necessary, as he could give me that only. I was designed for the profession of physic; but not having wherewithal to complete the requisite studies, the design but served to convince me of a parent's affection, and the error it had occasioned. In April last, I came to London with three pounds, and flattered myself this would be sufficient to supply me with the common necessaries of life, till my abilities should procure me more; of these I had the highest opinion, and a poetical vanity contributed to my delusion.

I knew little of the world, and had read books only: I wrote, and fancied perfection in my compositions; when I wanted bread they promised me affluence, and soothed me with dreams of reputation, whilst my appearance subjected me to contempt.

Time, reflection, and want, have shown me my mistake. I see my trifles in that which I think the true light; and, whilst I deem them such, have yet the opinion that holds them superior to the common run of poetical publications.

I had some knowledge of the late Mr. Nassau, the brother of Lord Rochford; in consequence of which, I asked his lordship's permission to inscribe my little work to him. Knowing it to be free from all political allusions and personal abuse, it was no very material point to me to whom it was dedicated. His lordship thought it none to him, and obligingly consented to my request. I was told that a subscription would be the more profitable method for me, and therefore endeavoured to circulate copies of the enclosed Proposals.

I am afraid, Sir, I disgust you with this very dull narration, but believe me punished in the misery that occasions it. You will conclude that, during this time, I must have been at more expense than I could afford; indeed, the most parsimonious could not have avoided it. The printer deceived me, and my little business has had every delay. The people with whom I live perceive my situation, and find me to be indigent and without friends. About ten days since, I was compelled to give a note for seven pounds, to avoid an arrest for about double that sum which I owe. I wrote to every friend I had, but my friends are poor likewise; the time of payment approached, and I ventured to represent my case to Lord Rochford. I begged to be credited for this sum till I received it of my subscribers, which, I believe, will be within one month; but to this letter I had no

reply, and I have probably offended by my importunity. Having used every honest means in vain, I yesterday confessed my inability, and obtained, with much entreaty, and as the greatest favour, a week's forbearance, when I am positively told, that I must pay the money, or prepare for a prison.

You will guess the purpose of so long an introduction. I appeal to you, Sir, as a good, and, let me add, a great man. I have no other pretensions to your favour than that I am an unhappy one. It is not easy to support the thoughts of confinement; and I am coward enough to dread such an end to my suspense.

Can you, Sir, in any degree, aid me with propriety? Will you ask any demonstration of my veracity? I have imposed upon myself, but I have been guilty of no other imposition. Let me, if possible, interest your compassion. I know those of rank and fortune are teased with frequent petitions, and are compelled to refuse the requests even of those whom they know to be in distress; it is therefore, with a distant hope I ventured to solicit such favour; but you will forgive me, Sir, if you do not think proper to relieve. It is impossible that sentiments like yours can proceed from any but a humane and generous heart.

I will call upon you, Sir, to-morrow, and if I have not the happiness to obtain credit with you, I must submit to my fate. My existence is a pain to myself, and every one near and dear to me are distressed in my distresses.

My connexions, once the source of happiness, now embitter the reverse of my fortune, and I have only to hope a speedy end to a life so unpromisingly begun: in which (though it ought not to be boasted of) I can reap some consolation from looking to the end of it. I am, Sir, with the greatest respect,

Your obedient and most humble servant,

GEORGE CRABBE.

II

George Crabbe to Edmund Burke

Bishopsgate Street, *June* 26 [1781].

Sir,—

It is my wish that this letter may reach you at a time when you are disengaged, but if otherwise, I entreat that it may not be immediately read, as it is sufficient to try your patience without the additional circumstance of asking your attention at an improper time. I think it right to lay before you, Sir, a further account of myself, and lest my present or future conduct should appear in a light that they ought not, I venture to inform you more particularly of the past; nor is this my sole motive; it is painful to me to be conscious that I have given you only partial information, though the part I gave was strictly true. Nor can I, with propriety, beg your advice in my present difficult situation, without relating the steps which led to it; on the other hand I consider how much I have troubled you, and that you probably know as much of me as you desire; I am apprehensive too that I shall not rise in your opinion by what I write, and it is my constant fear that, kind and benevolent as you are, these repeated attacks upon your patience may compel you to withdraw your assistance and leave me to lament the importunity of my applications. These reasons, however, do not balance their opposite ones; they oblige me to fear, but not to relinquish my purpose, and this long account is the result of a painful deliberation on the propriety of writing it.

I do not recollect the particulars of my first letter, but I believe, Sir, it informed you that my father has a place in the Custom House at Aldborough, that he has a large family, a little income, and no economy; he kept me two years

at a country boarding school, and then placed me with an apothecary, who was poor and had little business, but the premium he demanded was small. I continued two years with this man, I read romances and learned to bleed; my master was also a farmer, and I became useful to him in this his principal occupation; there was indeed no other distinction between the boy at the farm and myself, but that he was happy in being an annual servant, and I was bound by indentures. I do not mean, Sir, to trifle with you, but it is by no means a small matter with me, how I stand in your opinion, and now when I speak of my mingled follies and misfortunes, I wish to say all I can consistently with truth in vindication of the former. I rebelled in my servitude, for it became grievous. My father was informed of his son's idleness and disobedience; he came, and was severe in his correction of them: I knew myself then injur'd and became obstinate, and a second visit of my father's put an end to my slavery; he took me home with him, and with me two-thirds of the money he had advanced. He then placed me on very easy terms with a man of large business in a more reputable line; but I was never considered as a regular apprentice, and was principally employed in putting up prescriptions and compounding medicines. I was, notwithstanding, well treated in every respect but the principal one, for no pains were taken to give me an idea of the profession I was to live by. I read novels and poetry, and began to contribute to magazines and diaries. My master occasionally prophesy'd my ruin, and my father advised me to quit such follies; but the former would sometimes laugh at the things he condemned, and my father was a rhymer himself. I therefore paid little attention to these instructions, but was happy to find my signature in the *Lady's Magazine* was known to all the ladies round about the place where I liv'd in.

After four years I left my master according to our agreement; he is a man much esteemed in his profession and I believe he knows something of it, but I had not the good fortune to find it communicated to me. My father was at this time much distressed, and could not send me to London for the usual improvements. I meant to serve in a shop, but an unlucky opportunity offer'd itself at Aldborough; the apothecary there was become infamous by his bad conduct, and his enemies invited me to fix there immediately. My father urged it, and my pride assented; I was credited for the shatter'd furniture of an apothecary's shop, and the drugs that stocked it. I began to assume my late master's manner, and having some conscientious scruples I began to study also: I read much, collected extracts, and translated Latin books of Physic with a view of double improvement: I studied the Materia Medica and made some progress in Botany. I dissected dogs and fancied myself an anatomist, quitting entirely poetry, novels and books of entertainment. After one year, I left my little business to the care of a neighbouring surgeon, and came to London, where I attended the lectures of Messrs. Orme and Lowder on Midwifery, and occasionally stole round the hospitals to observe those remarkable cases, which might indeed, but which probably would never occur to me again. On my return I found my substitute had contracted a close intimacy with my rival. He cheated me and lost my business. The second woman who committed herself to my care, died before the month after her delivery was expired, and the more I became qualified for my profession, the less occasion I found for these qualifications. My business was the most trifling, and lay among the poor. I had a sister who starved with me; and on her account, it now pains me to say we often wanted bread; we were unwilling to add to my father's distress by letting

him see ours, and we fasted with much fortitude. Every one knew me to be poor; I was dunned for the most trifling sums, and compelled to pay the rent of my hut weekly, for my landlord was Justice of the Corporation and a man of authority. My druggist, a good-natured Quaker, gave me some friendly hints. My friends and advisers who had been zealous for my fixing in this place, entirely deserted me, for this reason only, that I had not been successful by following their advice. After three years spent in the misery of successless struggle, I found it necessary for me to depart, and I came to London.

The part of my conduct which I am about to relate, I am afraid will be greatly disapproved, and I shall be happy to find, Sir, you think it not more than foolish and inconsiderate. I knew the wages of a journeyman apothecary were trifling, and that nothing could be saved from them towards discharging the obligations I lay under. It became me to look for something more; I was visionary, and looked to him from whom no help cometh.

My father, some years since, attended at the House of Commons, on some election business, and he was also with the minister; I recollected to have heard him speak with some pleasure of Lord North's condescension and affability; and renouncing physic, I resolved to apply for employment in any department that I should be thought qualified for; I drew up a long and labour'd account of my motives for this application, and to prove my ignorance in the proper method of managing such applications, I accompanied my petition with a volume of verses, which I beg'd leave to submit to his lordship's perusal. I was admitted to Lord North on my second calling, and treated with more attention than I should now expect, though with none of that affability I had been led to hope for; what I still wonder at, is the civil part of his lordship's behaviour; my

request was idle and unreasonable; he might, with the greatest propriety, have dismiss'd me instantly, but whether through want of thought, or with an inclination to punish me, he gave me hope, was sorry for my circumstances, inquired who could recommend me, and was satisfied with those I named; he ordered me to apply again, and fixed a day. I am even now astonished at this unnecessary and cruel civility; it has greatly added to the inconveniences I now labour under, besides the anxiety of a long attendance growing daily more hopeless; for not only on the day fixed, but on all other days I went regularly to Downing Street, but from my first to my last interview with his lordship were three months. I had only a variation in the mode of answer as the porter was more or less inclined to be civil; the purport of all was the same: I wrote and entreated his lordship to accept or refuse me: I related my extreme poverty and my want of employment, but without effect. I again begg'd him to give some message to his servant, by which I might be certain that I had nothing further to hope for: this also was ineffectual. At last I had courage to offer so small a sum as half a crown, and the difficulty vanished: His lordship's porter was now civil, and his lordship surly: he dismiss'd me instantly and with some severity.

I had now recourse to my rhymes, and sent a hasty production to Mr. Dodsley, who returned it, observing that he could give no consideration for it, not because it wanted merit, but the town wanted attention; he was very obliging in his reply, for I am now convinced that it does want merit. Mr. Becket returned me a similar answer to an application of the same kind. I yet indulged a boyish opinion of my productions, and determined to publish; fortunately, however, I had hitherto conceal'd my name, and I continued to do so. Nicols, who had printed some remains of

Dryden and other poets, was for this reason fixed upon to usher my piece on the world: he printed 250 copies of *An Epistle to the Authors of the Monthly Review,* which, I believe, are now in the warehouse of Mr. Payne the bookseller, as I never heard of any sale they had. My patrons spoke of my poem favourably; but Messrs. the Critical Reviewers trimm'd me handsomely, and though I imputed this in a great measure to envy, I was very glad that I had not exposed my name on the occasion.

I now began to think more humbly of my talents: disappointment diminished my pride and increased my prudence. I solicited a subscription. Mr. Nassau, the late member for Malden, was well known to me, and this led me to apply to his brother for a permission to prefix his name to a dedication. Lord Rochford assented, but bade me hope more from the merit of my productions than that permission. I conveyed my proposals to my friends and obtained about 150 names, chiefly at Beccles, which are since increased, and are something more than 200. I have acquainted these people with the alteration in my intention, but I am desired to send my poem in whatever manner it comes out, and this is what certainly I spoke of to Mr. Dodsley. During a long interval betwixt my disappointment at Downing Street and that necessity which compelled me to write to you, to relate the distress I felt and the progress of my despair; I knew that my subscribers would not more than pay for the printing their volumes. I was contracting new debts and unable to satisfy old demands. I lived in terror, was imposed upon, and submitted to insults, and at length so threatened, that I was willing to make use of any expedient that would not involve me in guilt as well as vexation. I could accuse myself but of folly and imprudence and these lessen'd by inexperience,

and I thought that if my circumstances were known, there would be found some to relieve me. I looked as well as I could into every character that offered itself to my view, and resolved to apply where I found the most shining abilities, for I had learnt to distrust the humanity of weak people in all stations. You, Sir, are well acquainted with the result of my deliberation, and I have in one instance at least reason to applaud my own judgment.

It will perhaps be asked how I could live near twelve months a stranger in London and coming without money: it is not to be supposed that I was immediately credited—it is not—my support arose from another source. In the very early part of my life I contracted some acquaintance, which afterwards became a serious connexion, with the niece of a Suffolk gentleman of large fortune. Her mother lives with her three daughters at Beccles; her income is but the interest of £1,500, which at her decease is to be divided betwixt her children. The brother makes her annual income about £100: he is a rigid economist, and though I have the pleasure of his approbation, I have not had the good fortune to obtain more, nor from a prudent man could I perhaps expect so much. But from the family at Beccles I have every mark of their attention, and every proof of their disinterested regard. They have from time to time supplied me with such sums as they could possibly spare, and that they have not done more arose from my concealing the severity of my situation, for I would not involve in my errors or misfortunes a very generous and very happy family by which I am received with unaffected sincerity, and where I am treated as a son by a mother who can have no prudential reason to rejoice that her daughter has formed such a connexion. It is this family I lately visited, and by which I am pressed to return, for they know the necessity

there is for me to live with the utmost frugality, and hopeless of my succeeding in town they invite me to partake of their little fortune, and as I cannot mend my prospects, to avoid making them worse. This, Sir, is my situation: I have added—I have suppressed nothing; I am totally at a loss how to act, and what to undertake. I cannot think of living with my friends without a view of some employment or design, and I can form none, and I cannot continue in town without such, where the expense is (to me) much greater; my present undertaking can be of no material service I find, and the unlucky circumstance of printing so much of my miscellany renders it less so. I finish this tedious account by entreating your consideration on my present state and my future prospects. I cease to flatter myself, Sir; I only wish to live and be as little a burden as possible to my friends, but my indiscretion and my ill fortune have so carried me away that it requires a better judgment than my own to determine what is right for me to do; I do not wish, Sir, to obtrude my affairs too much upon you, but you have assisted and advised me, and even exclusive of the advantage I reap from your directions, I judged it right to give you this account; for all that is past I most sincerely thank you; you have comforted, you have relieved, you have honoured me; what is to come is in a situation like mine particularly mysterious; but whatever comes I will be grateful, and with a remembrance of the benefits I have received I will ever cherish the highest respect for the name and virtues of my generous benefactor.

I will wait upon you, Sir, as soon as possible with a fresh copy of my poem, correct as I have power to make it. In this I shall yet presume to ask your opinion; on any other subject it will now become me to be silent; thus far I feel a satisfaction from what I have written, that it is

entirely unreserved, and that it goes to one who knows how to allow for indiscretion and to pity misfortune.

I am, Sir,
Most respectfully,
Your much oblig'd and obedt. servant,
GEO. CRABBE.

A Dreamer Complains that He is Forced to Write for Bread

S. T. Coleridge to Joseph Cottle

Redcliff Hill, *February* 22, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR,—

It is my duty and business to thank God for all his dispensations, and to believe them the best possible; but, indeed, I think I should have been more thankful, if he had made me a journeyman shoemaker, instead of an author by trade. I have left my friends; I have left plenty; I have left that ease which would have secured a literary immortality, and have enabled me to give the public works conceived in moments of inspiration, and polish them with leisurely solicitude; and, alas! for what have I left them? for ——— who deserted me in the hour of distress, and for a scheme of virtue impracticable and romantic! So I am forced to write for bread; write the flights of poetic enthusiasm, when every minute I am hearing a groan from my wife. Groans, and complaints, and sickness! The present hour I am in a quick-set hedge of embarrassment, and whichever way I turn a thorn runs into me! The future is cloud and thick darkness! Poverty, perhaps, and the thin faces of them that want bread, looking up to me! Nor is this all. My happiest moments for composition are broken in upon by the reflection that I must make haste.

I am too late! I am already months behind! I have received my pay beforehand! Oh, wayward and desultory spirit of genius! Ill canst thou brook a taskmaster! The tenderest touch from the hand of obligation wounds thee like a scourge of scorpions.

I have been composing in the fields this morning, and came home to write down the first rude sheet of my preface, when I heard that your man had brought a note from you. I have not seen it, but I guess its contents. I am writing as fast as I can. Depend on it you shall not be out of pocket for me! I feel what I owe you, and independently of this I love you as a friend; indeed, so much, that I regret, seriously regret, that you have been my copyholder.

If I have written petulantly, forgive me. God knows I am sore all over. God bless you, and believe me that, setting gratitude aside, I love and esteem you, and have your interest at heart full as much as my own.

S. T. Coleridge.

Elia is Repentant

Charles Lamb to Dr. Asbury

Dear Sir—It is an observation of a wise man that "moderation is best in all things." I cannot agree with him "in liquor." There is a smoothness and oiliness in wine that makes it go down by a natural channel, which I am positive was made for that descending. Else, why does not wine choke us? could Nature have made that sloping lane, not to facilitate the down-going? She does nothing in vain. You know that better than I. You know how often she has helped you at a dead lift, and how much better entitled she is to a fee than yourself sometimes, when you carry off the credit. Still there is something due to

manners and customs, and I should apologise to you and Mrs. Asbury for being absolutely carried home upon a man's shoulders thro' Silver Street, up Parson's Lane, by the Chapels (which might have taught me better), and then to be deposited like a dead log at Gaffar Westwood's, who it seems does not "insure" against intoxication. Not that the mode of conveyance is objectionable. On the contrary, it is more easy than a one-horse chaise. Ariel in the *Tempest* says

"On a Bat's back do I fly, after sunset merrily."

Now I take it that Ariel must sometimes have stayed out late of nights. Indeed, he pretends that "where the bee sucks, there lurks he," as much as to say that his suction is as innocent as that little innocent (but damnably stinging when he is provok'd) winged creature. But I take it, that Ariel was fond of metheglin, of which the Bees are notorious Brewers. But then you will say: What a shocking sight to see a middle-aged gentleman-and-a-half riding upon a Gentleman's back up Parson's Lane at midnight! Exactly the time for that sort of conveyance, when nobody can see him, nobody but Heaven and his own conscience; now Heaven makes fools, and don't expect much from her own creation; and as for conscience, She and I have long since come to a compromise. I have given up false modesty, and she allows me to abate a little of the true. I like to be liked, but I don't care about being respected. I don't respect myself. But, as I was saying, I thought he would have let me down just as we got to Lieutenant Barker's Coal-shed (or emporium), but by a cunning jerk I eased myself, and righted my posture. I protest, I thought myself in a palanquin, and never felt myself so grandly carried. It was a slave under me. There was I, all but my reason. And what is reason? and what is the loss of it?

and how often in a day do we do without it, just as well? Reason is only counting, two and two makes four. And if on my passage home, I thought it made five, what matter? Two and two will just make four, as it always did, before I took the finishing glass that did my business. My sister has begged me to write an apology to Mrs. A. and you for disgracing your party; now it does seem to me, that I rather honoured your party, for every one that was not drunk (and one or two of the ladies, I am sure, were not) must have been set off greatly in the contrast to me. I was the scapegoat. The soberer they seemed. By the way, is magnesia good on these occasions? *iii* pol: med: sum: ante noct: in rub: can:. I am no licentiate, but know enough of simples to beg you to send me a draught after this model. But still you will say (or the men and maids at your house will say) that it is not a seemly sight for an old gentleman to go home pick-a-pack. Well, may be it is not. But I never studied grace. I take it to be a mere superficial accomplishment. I regard more the internal acquisitions. The great object after supper is to get home, and whether that is obtained in a horizontal posture or perpendicular (as foolish men and apes affect for dignity), I think is little to the purpose. The end is always greater than the means. Here I am, able to compose a sensible rational apology, and what signifies how I got here? I have just sense enough to remember I was very happy last night, and to thank our kind host and hostess, and that's sense enough, I hope.

CHARLES LAMB.

N.B.—What is good for a desperate head-ache? Why, patience, and a determination not to mind being miserable all day long. And that I have made my mind up to. So, here goes. It is better than not being alive at all, which I

might have been, had your man toppled me down at Lieut. Barker's Coal-shed. My sister sends her sober compliments to Mrs. A. She is not much the worse.—Yours truly,

C. Lamb.

Genius in Obscurity: Jane Eyre in Real Life

I

Charlotte Brontë to Miss Emily J. Brontë

Stonegappe, *June 8th,* 1839.

Dearest Lavinia,—I am most exceedingly obliged to you for the trouble you have taken in seeking up my things and sending them all right. The box and its contents were most acceptable. I only wish I had asked you to send me some letter-paper. This is my last sheet but two. When you can send the other articles of raiment now manufacturing, I shall be right down glad of them.

I have striven hard to be pleased with my new situation. The country, the house, and the grounds are, as I have said, divine. But, alack-a-day! there is such a thing as seeing all beautiful around you—pleasant woods, winding white paths, green lawns, and blue sunshiny sky—and not having a free moment or a free thought left to enjoy them in. The children are constantly with me, and more riotous, perverse, unmanageable cubs never grew. As for correcting them, I soon quickly found that was entirely out of the question: they are to do as they like. A complaint to Mrs. Sidgwick brings only black looks upon oneself, and unjust, partial excuses to screen the children. I have tried that plan once. It succeeded so notably that I shall try it no more. I said in my last letter that Mrs. Sidgwick did not know me. I now begin to find that she does not intend to know me, that she cares nothing in the world about me

except to contrive how the greatest possible quantity of labour may be squeezed out of me, and to that end she overwhelms me with oceans of needlework, yards of cambric to hem, muslin night-caps to make, and, above all things, dolls to dress. I do not think she likes me at all, because I can't help being shy in such an entirely novel scene, surrounded as I have hitherto been by strange and constantly changing faces. I see now more clearly than I have ever done before that a private governess has no existence, is not considered as a living and rational being except as connected with the wearisome duties she has to fulfil. While she is teaching the children, working for them, amusing them, it is all right. If she steals a moment for herself she is a nuisance. Nevertheless, Mrs. Sidgwick is universally considered an amiable woman. Her manners are fussily affable. She talks a great deal, but as it seems to me not much to the purpose. Perhaps I may like her better after a while. At present I have no call to her. Mr. Sidgwick is in my opinion a hundred times better—less profession, less bustling condescension, but a far kinder heart. It is very seldom that he speaks to me, but when he does I always feel happier and more settled for some minutes after. He never asks me to wipe the children's smutty noses or tie their shoes or fetch their pinafores or set them a chair. One of the pleasantest afternoons I have spent here—indeed, the only one at all pleasant—was when Mr. Sidgwick walked out with his children, and I had orders to follow a little behind. As he strolled on through his fields with his magnificent Newfoundland dog at his side, he looked very like what a frank, wealthy, Conservative gentleman ought to be. He spoke freely and unaffectedly to the people he met, and though he indulged his children and allowed them to tease himself far too much, he would not suffer them grossly to insult others.

I am getting quite to have a regard for the Carter family. At home I should not care for them, but here they are friends. Mr. Carter was at Mirfield yesterday and saw Anne. He says she was looking uncommonly well. Poor girl, *she* must indeed wish to be at home. As to Mrs. Collins' report that Mrs. Sidgwick intended to keep me permanently, I do not think that such was ever her design. Moreover, I would not stay without some alterations. For instance, this burden of sewing would have to be removed. It is too bad for anything. I never in my whole life had my time so fully taken up. Next week we are going to Swarcliffe, Mr. Greenwood's place near Harrogate, to stay three weeks or a month. After that time I hope Miss Hoby will return. Don't show this letter to papa or aunt, only to Branwell. They will think I am never satisfied wherever I am. I complain to you because it is a relief, and really I have had some unexpected mortifications to put up with. However, things may mend, but Mrs. Sidgwick expects me to do things that I cannot do—to love her children and be entirely devoted to them. I am really very well. I am so sleepy that I can write no more. I must leave off. Love to all.—Good-bye.

Direct your next dispatch—J. Greenwood, Esq., Swarcliffe, near Harrogate. C. Brontë.

II

Charlotte Brontë to Miss Ellen Nussey

Upperwood House, *May 4th*, 1841.

Dear Nell,—I have been a long time without writing to you; but I think, knowing as you do how I am situated in the matter of time, you will not be angry with me. Your brother George will have told you that he did not go into the house when we arrived at Rawdon, for which omission

of his Mrs. White was very near blowing me up. She went quite red in the face with vexation when she heard that the gentleman had just driven within the gates and then back again, for she is very touchy in the matter of opinion. Mr. White also seemed to regret the circumstance from more hospitable and kindly motives. I assure you, if you were to come and see me you would have quite a fuss made over you. During the last three weeks that hideous operation called "a thorough clean" has been going on in the house. It is now nearly completed, for which I thank my stars, as during its progress I have fulfilled the twofold character of nurse and governess, while the nurse has been transmuted into cook and housemaid. That nurse, by-the-bye, is the prettiest lass you ever saw, and when dressed has much more the air of a lady than her mistress. Well can I believe that Mrs. White has been an exciseman's daughter, and I am convinced also that Mr. White's extraction is very low. Yet Mrs. White talks in an amusing strain of pomposity about his and her family and connections, and affects to look down with wondrous hauteur on the whole race of tradesfolk, as she terms men of business. I was beginning to think Mrs. White a good sort of body in spite of all her bouncing and boasting, her bad grammar and worse orthography, but I have had experience of one little trait in her character which condemns her a long way with me. After treating a person in the most familiar terms of equality for a long time, if any little thing goes wrong she does not scruple to give way to anger in a very coarse, unladylike manner. I think passion is the true test of vulgarity or refinement.

This place looks exquisitely beautiful just now. The grounds are certainly lovely, and all is as green as an emerald. I wish you would just come and look at it. Mrs. White would be as proud as Punch to show it you. Mr.

White has been writing an urgent invitation to papa, entreating him to come and spend a week here. I don't at all wish papa to come, it would be like incurring an obligation. Somehow, I have managed to get a good deal more control over the children lately—this makes my life a good deal easier; also, by dint of nursing the fat baby, it has got to know me and be fond of me. I suspect myself of growing rather fond of it. Exertion of any kind is always beneficial. Come and see me if you can in any way get, I *want* to see you. It seems Martha Taylor is fairly gone. Good-bye, my lassie.—Yours insufferably, C. Brontë.

The Cock that Refused to be Silenced

Jane Welsh Carlyle to Mrs. Welsh

5, Cheyne Walk, *February* 23, 1842.

I am continuing to mend. If I could only get a good sleep, I shall be quite recovered; but, alas! we are gone to the devil again in the sleeping department. That dreadful woman next door, instead of putting away the cock which we so pathetically appealed against, has produced another. The servant has ceased to take charge of them. They are stuffed with ever so many hens into a small hencoop every night, and left out of doors the night long. Of course they are not comfortable, and of course they crow and screech not only from daylight, but from midnight, and so near that it goes through one's head every time like a sword. The night before last they woke me every quarter of an hour, but I slept some in the intervals; for they had not succeeded in rousing *him* above. But last night they had him up at three. He went to bed again, and got some sleep after, the "horrors" not recommencing their efforts till five; but I, listening every minute for a new screech that would send

him down a second time and prepare such wretchedness for the day, could sleep no more.

What is to be done, God knows! If this goes on, he will soon be in Bedlam; and I too, for anything I see to the contrary: and how to hinder it from going on? The last note we sent the cruel women would not open. I send for the maid and she will not come. I would give them guineas for quiet, but they prefer tormenting us. In the *law* there is no resource in such cases. They may keep beasts wild in their back yard if they choose to do so. Carlyle swears he will shoot them, and orders me to borrow Mazzini's gun. Shoot them with all my heart if the consequences were merely having to go to a police officer and pay the damage. But the woman would only be irritated thereby in getting fifty instead of two. If there is to be any shooting, however, I will do it myself. It will sound better my shooting them on principle than his doing it in a passion.

This despicable nuisance is not at all unlikely to drive us out of the house after all, just when he had reconciled himself to stay in it. How one is vexed with little things in this life! The great evils one triumphs over bravely, but the little eat away one's heart.

The Dog that Would Bark

Jane Welsh Carlyle to Thomas Carlyle

Wednesday, October 1, 1845.

Well! now I am subsided again; set in for a quiet evening, at leisure to write, and with plenty to write about. I know not how it is, I seem to myself to be leading a most solitary, and virtuous, and eventless life here, at this dead season of the year; and yet when I sit down to write, I have so many things to tell always that I am puzzled where

to begin. Decidedly, I was meant to have been a subaltern of the Daily Press—not "a penny-lady,"[1] but a penny-a-liner; for it is not only a faculty with me but a necessity of my nature to make a great deal out of nothing.

To begin with something I have been treasuring up for a week (for I would not holloa till we were out of the wood): I have *put down the dog!*[2] "The dog! wasn't he put down at Christmas, with a hare?" It seemed so; and "we wished we might get it!" But on my return I found him in the old place, at the back of the wall, barking "like—like—anything!" "Helen!" I said, with the calmness of a great despair, "is not that the same dog?" "Deed is it!" said she, "and the whole two months you have been away, its tongue has never lain! it has driven even me almost distracted!" I said no more, but I had my own thoughts on the subject. Poison? a pistol bullet? the Metropolitan Police? Some way or other that dog—or I—must terminate.

Meanwhile I went on cleaning with what heart I could. "My dear! Will you listen to the catastrophe?" I am hastening, slowly—*festina lente*. Bless your heart! "there's nothing pushing"—"the rowins[3] are a' in the loft" for this night! Well! it was the evening after John's departure.

I had been too busy all day to listen; the candles were lit, and I had set myself with my feet on the fender to enjoy the happiness of being let alone, and to—bid myself

[1] In Scotland the "Penny Ladies" (extraneously so-called) were busy, "benevolent" persons; subscribers of a penny a week for educating, etc.: not with much success.—T. C.

[2] Oh, my heroine! Endless were her feats in regard to all this, and her gentle talents too! I could not have lived here but for that, had there been nothing more.—T. C.

[3] "Rowins" are wool completely carded, ready for the wheel when it comes down from "the loft."—T. C.

"consider." "Bow-wow-wow," roared the dog, "and dashed the cup of fame from my brow!" "Bow-wow-wow," again, and again, till the whole universe seemed turned into one great dog-kennel! I hid my face in my hands and groaned inwardly. "Oh, destiny accursed! what use of scrubbing and sorting? All this availeth me nothing, so long as the dog sitteth at the washerman's gate!" I could have burst into tears, but I did not! "I was a republican—before the Revolution; and I never wanted energy!" I ran for ink and paper, and wrote:—

"DEAR GAMBARDELLA,—You once offered to shoot some cocks for me; that service I was enabled to dispense with; but now I accept your devotion. Come, if you value my sanity, and——" But here, "a sudden thought struck me." He could not take aim at the dog without scaling the high wall, and in so doing he would certainly be seized by the police; so I threw away that first sibylline leaf, and wrote another—to the washerman! Once more I offered him "any price for that horrible dog—to hang it," offered "to settle a yearly income on it if it would hold its accursed tongue." I implored, threatened, imprecated, and ended by proposing that, in case he could not take an immediate final resolution, he should in the interview "make [1] the dog dead-drunk with a bottle of whiskey, which I sent for the purpose!" Helen was sent off with the note and whiskey; and I sat, all concentrated, awaiting her return, as if the fate of nations had depended on my diplomacy; and so it did, to a certain extent! Would not the inspirations of "the first man in Europe" be modified,[2] for the next six months at least, by the fact, who should come off victorious, I or the dog? Ah! it is curious to think how first men

[1] Mark, mark!—T. C.

[2] Quiz mainly this, and glad mockery of some who deserved it. —T. C.

in Europe, and first women too, are acted upon by the inferior animals!

Helen came, but even before that had "the raven down of night" smoothed itself in heavenly silence!

God grant this were not mere accident; oh, no! verily it was not accident. The washerman's two daughters had seized upon and read the note; and what was death to me had been such rare amusement to them, that they "fell into fits of laughter" in the first place; and, in the second place, ran down and untied the dog, and solemnly pledged themselves that it should "never trouble me more!" At Christmas they had sent it into the country for three months "to learn to be quiet," and then chained it in the old place; now they would take some final measure. Next morning came a note from the washerman himself, written on glazed paper, with a crow-quill, apologising, promising; he could not put it away entirely; as it was "a great protection" to him and "belonged to a relative" (who shall say where sentiment may not exist!), but he "had untied it, and would take care it gave me no further trouble," and he "returned his grateful thanks for what 'as been sent." It is a week ago: and one may now rest satisfied that the tying up caused the whole nuisance. The dog is to be seen going about there all day in the yard, like any other Christian dog, "carrying out" your principle of silence, not merely "platonically," but practically.

Since that night, as Helen remarks, "it has not said one word!" So, "thank God," you still have quietude to return to![1]

[1] Well do I remember that dog, behind the wall, on the other side of the street. Never heard more.—T. C.

The Penalties of Fame: Sample of the Correspondence Which is Addressed to a Prophet of His Age

To Thomas Carlyle

Sir, 1869.

As I learned from the note that Mrs. —— received from you that you were not unwilling to pay some attention to what I might have to say, I have ventured to trouble you with the following account of my wretched state. It is not without horrible misgivings that I do it. But you must know the nature of my complaint to enable you to prescribe a remedy, if remedy there be for it. Know then the secret of all my sorrows and my hardships. I am ugly—I had almost said hideous—to behold. Oh what devilish misfortune to be sent into the world ugly. How often do I curse the day of my birth. How often do I curse the mother that brought me into this world out of nothingness into hellish misery—aye, and often do more than curse her.

I have no friends or companions; all shun and despise me. As I cannot share the pleasures and enjoyments of those around me, I have sought to beguile away my time with books. My mental capacities are near zero, so I read them to little purpose; yet they have aroused in me dim ideas of something I cannot express—something that almost makes me glad I am in the world. I do not like to go and seek work (necessity compels me sometimes) for I cannot bear the taunts and jibes of those I work with, so I am always poor.

Oh what a devilish life is mine! You call this a God's world; if it is, I must say I am a God-forgotten mortal. You talk of big coming Eternities; you call man a Son of Earth and Heaven. I often ponder over such phrases as

these, thinking to find some meaning in them that would bid me look into brighter prospects in the dark future. I, who have such a wretched life here, often try to make myself believe that there is a better life awaiting me elsewhere.

I am about twenty-five years of age. I am heartily sick of life, and I live here only because I have not the courage to die. I flatter myself that I shall yet get courage. I have become misanthropical. I hate all things. How I wish that this solid globe was shattered into fragments, and I left alone to gaze upon the ruins. Now if you could show me that I have anything to live for, that there is anything better waiting me in the "big coming eternities," anything that would make me bear "the whips and scorns of time," I will ever remember your kindness with gratitude.

I know no such hopes can be aught to me. It would have been much better that I had never been born. It is hard for me to confess all this to you—hard for me to confess it to myself. I will conclude, fearing that I have trespassed too far on your attention already.

II

Pocket Philosophies

Though body changes, mind is forever.

James Howell (1594(?)-1666)

That the decay of passion strengthens philosophy, enabling men to grow calmly old.

Lord Bolingbroke (1678-1751)

A philosophy of old age.

Lady Mary Montagu (1689-1762)

Upon knowing when to die.

Horace Walpole (1717-1797)

"What business had I to live to the brink of seventy-nine?"

Horace Walpole (1717-1797)

A foreshadowing of Mark Tapley.

Sydney Smith (1771-1845)

Death in old age.

Sydney Smith (1771-1845)

He hopes that his ego will survive.

Robert Southey (1774-1843)

Foreshadowings of the Ode on a Grecian Urn: that Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty—and that both are arrived at through sensation.

John Keats (1795-1821)

The world can do without us.

Lord Macaulay (1800-1859)

"I'll admire the wing of a cock sparrow as much as the pinion of an archangel."

William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863)

Advice to the unmarried.

Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855)

That all men and women are but dust and ashes—a spark of divinity now and then kindling in the dull heap—that is all.

Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855)

That man is lost in the antiquity of time.

Edward FitzGerald (1809-1883)

"We bid you to hope."

James Smetham (1821-1889)

He explains his religion of kindness.

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894)

Though Body Changes, Mind is Forever

James Howell[1] *to Dr. Francis Mansell*

Venice, *July* 1*st*, 1621.

These wishes come to you from Venice, a place where there is nothing wanting that heart can wish; renowned Venice, the admired'st city in the world, a city that all Europe is bound unto, for she is her greatest rampart against that huge eastern tyrant, the Turk, by sea; else, I believe, he had overrun all Christendom by this time. Against him this city hath performed notable exploits, and not only against him, but divers others; she hath restored

[1] James Howell was born in Carmarthenshire and educated at Oxford. His life was many-sided. He became steward to a patent-glass manufactory in whose interests he went abroad in 1619, to engage workmen and purchase materials, in the course of which journey he visited the great commercial centres of Holland, Flanders, France, Spain, and Italy. On his return, he abandoned business and became travelling companion to a young gentleman, with whom he revisited France. Later he was appointed secretary to Lord Scrope, President of The North, and in 1627 was elected to be one of the Parliamentary representatives of the Corporation of Richmond. Having written two small poems, complimentary to Charles I., he was, in 1640, awarded the clerkship of the council; of which position he was soon deprived, being imprisoned, by order of a committee of Parliament, in the Fleet, where he remained until the King's death. At the Restoration, he was appointed historiographer-royal, being the first to bear that title. His Epistolæ Ho-Elianæ, or Familiar Letters, from which the selections included in this book are taken, were first printed in 1645, and are amongst the earliest specimens of epistolary literature in our language.

emperors to their thrones, and popes to their chairs, and with her galleys often preserved St. Peter's bark from sinking; for which, by way of reward, one of his successors espoused her to the sea, which marriage is solemnly renewed every year in solemn procession by the Doge and all the Clarissimos, and a gold ring cast into the sea out of the great Galeasse, called the Bucentoro, wherein the first ceremony was performed by the pope himself, above three hundred years since, and they say it is the self-same vessel still, though often put upon careen, and trimmed. This made me think, nay, I fell upon an abstracted notion in philosophy, and a speculation touching the body of man, which being in perpetual flux, and a kind of succession of decays, and consequently requiring, ever and anon, a restoration of what it loseth of the virtue of the former aliment, and what was converted after the third concoction into a blood and fleshly substance, which, as in all other sublunary bodies that have internal principles of heat, useth to transpire, breathe out, and waste away through invisible pores, by exercise, motion, and sleep, to make room still for a supply of new nurriture: I fell, I say, to consider whether our bodies may be said to be of like condition with this Bucentoro, which, though it be reputed still the same vessel, yet I believe there's not a foot of that timber remaining which it had upon the first dock, having been, as they tell me, so often planked and ribbed, calked and pieced. In like manner, our bodies may be said to be daily repaired by new sustenance, which begets new blood and consequently new spirits, new humours, and, I may say, new flesh; the old, by continued deperdition and insensible perspirations, evaporating still out of us, and giving way to fresh; so that I make a question whether, by reason of these perpetual reparations and accretions, the body of man may be said to be the same numerical body in his old

age that he had in his manhood, or the same in his manhood that he had in his youth, the same in his youth that he carried about with him in childhood, or the same in his childhood which he wore first in the womb. I make a doubt whether I had the same identical, individually numerical body, when I carried a calf-leather satchel to school in Hereford, as when I wore a lamb-skin hood in Oxford; or whether I have the same mass of blood in my veins, and the same flesh, now in Venice, which I carried about me three years since, up and down London streets, having, in lieu of beer and ale, drunk wine all the while, and fed upon different viands. Now, the stomach is like a crucible, for it hath a chemical kind of virtue to transmute one body into another, to transubstantiate flesh and fruits into flesh within and about us; but though it be questionable whether I wear the same flesh which is fluxible, I am sure my hair is not the same, for you may remember I went flaxen-haired out of England, but you shall find me returned with a very dark brown, which I impute not only to the heat and air of these hot countries I have eat my bread in, but to the quality and difference of food; you will say that hair is but an excrementitious thing, and makes not to this purpose; moreover, methinks I hear thee say that this may be true only in the blood and spirits, or such fluid parts, not in the solid and heterogeneal parts. But I will press no further at this time this philosophical notion, which the sight of Bucentoro infused into me, for it hath already made me exceed the bounds of a letter, and, I fear me, to trespass too much upon your patience; I leave the further disquisition of this point to your own contemplations, who are a far riper philosopher than I; and have waded deeper into, and drunk more of Aristotle's well. But, to conclude, though it be doubtful whether I carry about me the same body or no in all points that I had in England, I am

well assured I bear still the same mind, and therein I verify the old verse:

Coelum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt,

"The air, but not the mind, they change,
Who in outlandish countries range."

For, what alterations soever happen in this microcosm, in this little world, this small bulk and body of mine, you may be confident that nothing shall alter my affections, especially towards you, but that I will persevere still the same —the very same

JAMES HOWELL.

THAT THE DECAY OF PASSION STRENGTHENS PHILOSOPHY, ENABLING MEN TO GROW CALMLY OLD

Lord Bolingbroke to Swift

1733.

I have delayed several posts answering your letter of January last, in hopes of being able to speak to you about a project which concerns us both, but me the most, since the success of it would bring us together. It has been a good while in my head, and at my heart; if it can be set a-going, you shall hear more of it. I was ill in the beginning of winter for near a week, but in no danger either from the nature of my distemper, or from the attendance of three physicians. Since that bilious intermitting fever, I have had, as I had before, better health than the regard I have paid to health deserves. We are both in the decline of life, my dear Dean, and have been some years going down the hill; let us make the passage as smooth as we can. Let us fence against the physical evil by care, and the use of those means which experience must have pointed out to us: let us fence against moral evil by philosophy. I renounce the

alternative you propose. But we may, nay (if we will follow nature, and do not work up imagination against her plainest dictates), we shall of course grow every year more indifferent to life, and to the affairs and interests of a system out of which we are soon to go. This is much better than stupidity. The decay of passion strengthens philosophy; for passion may decay, and stupidity not succeed. Passions, (says Pope, our divine, as you will see one time or other,) are the *gales* of life; let us not complain that they do not blow a storm. What hurt does age do us, in subduing what we toil to subdue all our lives? It is now six in the morning; I recall the time, (and am glad it is over,) when about this hour I used to be going to bed surfeited with pleasure, or jaded with business: my head often full of schemes, and my heart as often full of anxiety. Is it a misfortune, think you, that I rise at this hour, refreshed, serene, and calm? that the past, and even the present affairs of life stand like objects at a distance from me, where I can keep off the disagreeable so as not to be strongly affected by them, and from whence I can draw the others nearer to me? Passions in their force would bring all these, nay, even future contingencies, about my ears at once, and reason would but ill defend me in the scuffle. I leave Pope to speak for myself; but I must tell you how much my wife is obliged to you. She says, she would find strength enough to nurse you, if you were here; and yet, God knows, she is extremely weak: the slow fever works under, and mines the constitution; we keep it off sometimes, but still it returns, and makes new breaches before nature can repair the old ones. I am not ashamed to say to you, that I admire her more every hour of my life: death is not to her the King of Terrors; she beholds him without the least. When she suffers much, she wishes for him as a deliverer from pain; when life is tolerable,

she looks on him with dislike, because he is to separate her from those friends to whom she is more attached than to life itself. You shall not stay for my next so long as you have for this letter; and in every one Pope shall write something much better than the scraps of old philosophers, which were the presents, munuscula, that stoical fop Seneca used to send in every epistle to his friend Lucilius.

[1] PS.—My lord has spoken justly of his lady; why not I of my mother? Yesterday was her birth-day, now entering on the ninety-first year of her age; her memory much diminished, but her senses very little hurt, her sight and hearing good; she sleeps not ill, eats moderately, drinks water, says her prayers; this is all she does. I have reason to thank God for her continuing so long a very good and tender parent, and for allowing me to exercise for some years those cares which are now as necessary to her as hers have been to me. An object of this sort daily before one's eyes, very much softens the mind, but perhaps may hinder it from the willingness of contracting other ties of the like domestic nature, when one finds how painful it is, even to enjoy the tender pleasures. I have formerly made some strong efforts to get and to deserve a friend: perhaps it were wiser never to attempt it, but live extempore, and look upon the world only as a place to pass through: just pay your hosts their dues, disperse a little charity, and hurry on. Yet I am just now writing (or rather planning) a book,[2] to make mankind look upon this life with comfort and pleasure, and put morality in good humour. And just now too I am going to see one I love very tenderly; and to-morrow to entertain several civil people, whom if we call friends, it is by courtesy of England. *Sic, sic juvat ire*

[1] Added by Pope.
[2] The *Essay on Man*.

sub umbras. While we do live, we must make the best of life.

Cantantes licet usque (minus via lædet) eamus:

as the shepherd said in Virgil when the road was long and heavy. I am yours.

A Philosophy of Old Age

Lady Mary Montagu to Sir James Steuart

Venice, *Jan.* 13, 1761. [1759.]

I have indulged myself some time with day-dreams of the happiness I hope to enjoy this summer in the conversation of Lady Fanny and Sir James S.; but I hear such frightful stories of precipices and hovels during the whole journey, I begin to fear there is no such pleasure allotted me in the book of fate: the Alps were once molehills in my sight when they interposed between me and the slightest inclination; now age begins to freeze, and brings with it the usual train of melancholy apprehensions. Poor humankind! We always march blindly on; the fire of youth represents to us all our wishes possible; and, that over, we fall into despondency that prevents even easy enterprises: a store in winter, a garden in summer, bounds all our desires, or at least our undertakings. If Mr. Steuart would disclose all his imaginations, I dare swear he has some thoughts of emulating Alexander or Demosthenes, perhaps both: nothing seems difficult at his time of life, everything at mine. I am very unwilling, but am afraid I must submit to the confinement of my boat and my easy-chair, and go no farther than they can carry me. Why are our views so extensive and our powers so miserably limited? This is among the mysteries which (as you justly say) will remain ever unfolded to our shallow capacities. I am

much inclined to think we are no more free agents than the queen of clubs when she victoriously takes prisoner the knave of hearts; and all our efforts (when we rebel against destiny) as weak as a card that sticks to a glove when the gamester is determined to throw it on the table. Let us then (which is the only true philosophy) be contented with our chance, and make the best of that bad bargain of being born in this vile planet; where we may find, however (God be thanked), much to laugh at, though little to approve.

I confess I delight extremely in looking on men in that light. How many thousands trample under foot honour, ease, and pleasure, in pursuit of ribands of certain colours, dabs of embroidery on their clothes, and gilt wood carved behind their coaches in a particular figure? Others breaking their hearts till they are distinguished by the shape and colour of their hats; and, in general, all people earnestly seeking what they do not want, while they neglect the real blessings in their possession—I mean the innocent gratification of their senses, which is all we can properly call our own. For my part, I will endeavour to comfort myself for the cruel disappointment I find in renouncing Tubingen, by eating some fresh oysters on the table.

Upon Knowing When to Die

Horace Walpole to Lady Craven

Berkeley-square, *Dec.* 11, 1788.

It is agreeable to your ladyship's usual goodness to honour me with another letter—and I may say to your equity, too, after I had proved to monsieur Mercier, by the list of dates of my letters, that it was not mine but the post's fault, that you did not receive one that I had the

honour of writing to you about a year ago. Not, madam, that I could wonder if you had the prudence to drop a correspondence with an old superannuated man, who, conscious of his decay, has had the decency of not troubling with his dotages persons of not near your ladyship's youth and vivacity. I have long been of opinion that few persons know *when* to die—I am not so English as to mean when to dispatch themselves—no, but when to go out of the world. I have usually applied this opinion to those who have made a considerable figure, and consequently it was not adapted to myself. Yet even we cyphers ought not to fatigue the public scene when we are become lumber. Thus, being quite out of the question, I will explain my maxim, which is more wholesome, the higher it is addressed. My opinion then is, that when any personage has shown as much as is possible in his or her best walk (and not to repeat both genders every minute, I will use the male as the common of the two), he should take up his Struldbrugism, and be heard of no more. Instances will be still more explanatory. Voltaire ought to have pretended to die after Alzire, Mahomet, and Semiramis, and not have produced his wretched last pieces. Lord Chatham should have closed his political career with his immortal war—And how weak was Garrick, when he had quitted the stage, to limp after the tatters of fame by writing and reading pitiful poems, and even by *sitting* to read plays which he had acted with such fire and energy?—We have another example in Mr. Anstey; who, if he had a friend on earth, would have been obliged to him for being knocked on the head the moment he had published the *first* edition of the Bath Guide; for even in the second he had exhausted his whole stock of inspiration, and has never written anything tolerable since. When such unequal authors print their works together, one may apply in a new

light the old hacked simile of Mezentius, who tied together the living and the dead.

"What Business Had I to Live to the Brink of Seventy-nine?"

Horace Walpole to Mrs. H. More

Strawberry-hill, *August* 29, 1796.

You are not only the most beneficent, but the most benevolent of human beings. Not content with being a perfect saint yourself, which (forgive me for saying) does not always imply prodigious compassion for others; not satisfied with being the most disinterested, nay, the reverse of all patriots, for you sacrifice your very slender fortune, not to improve it, but to keep the poor honest, instead of corrupting them; and you write politics as simply, intelligibly, and unartfully, not as cunningly as you can to mislead.—Well, with all these giant virtues, you can find room and time in your heart and occupations for harbouring and exercising what those monkeys of pretensions, the French, invented, and called *les petites morales,* which were to supply society with filigrain duties in the room of all virtues, which they abolished on their road to the adoption of philosophy and atheism—Yes, though for ever busied in exercising services and charities for individuals, or for whole bodies of people, you do not leave a cranny empty into which you can slip a kindness. Your inquiry after me to miss B—— is so friendly, that I cannot trust solely to her thanking you for your letter, as I am sure she will, having sent it to her as she is bathing in the sea at Bognor rocks: but I must with infinite gratitude give you a brief account of myself—a very poor one, indeed, must I give. Condemned as a cripple to my couch for the rest of

my days I doubt I am. Though perfectly healed, and even without a scar, my leg is so weakened that I have not recovered the least use of it, nor can move cross my chamber unless lifted up and held by two servants. This constitutes me totally a prisoner—But why should not I be so? What business had I to live to the brink of seventy-nine? And why should one litter the world at that age? Then I thank God, I have vast blessings: I have preserved my eyes, ears, and teeth; I have no pain left; and I would bet with any dormouse that it cannot outsleep me—And when one can afford to pay for every relief, comfort, or assistance, that can be procured at four-score, dares one complain? Must not one reflect on the thousands of old poor, who are suffering martyrdom, and have none of those alleviations? —O my good friend, I must consider myself as at my best; for if I drag on a little longer, can I expect to remain even so tolerably. Nay, does the world present a pleasing scene? Are not the devils escaped out of the swine, and overrunning the earth headlong? What a theme for meditation, that the excellent humane Louis Seize should have been prevented from saving himself by that monster Drouet, and that that execrable wretch should be saved even by those, some of whom one may suppose he meditated to massacre; for at what does a Frenchman stop?—But I will quit this shocking subject, and for another reason, too: I omitted one of my losses, almost the use of my fingers; they are so lame that I cannot write a dozen lines legibly, but am forced to have recourse to my secretary.—I will only reply by a word or two to a question you seem to ask; how I like ——? I do not care to say how little.——Alas! she has reversed experience, which I have long thought reverses its own utility by coming at the wrong end of our life when we do not want it. This author knew the world and penetrated characters before she stepped over the

threshold; and now she has seen so much of it she has little or no insight at all—perhaps she apprehended having seen too much—and kept the bags of foul air that she brought from the Cave of Tempests too closely tied.

Adieu, thou who mightest be one of the cleverest of women if thou didst not prefer being *one* of the best! And when I say *one* of the best, I have not engaged my vote for the second.

Yours most gratefully.

A Foreshadowing of Mark Tapley

Sydney Smith to Lady Holland

Heslington, *September* 9, 1809.

My dear Lady Holland,—

I heard you laugh at me for being happy in the country, and upon this I have a few words to say. In the first place, whether one lives or dies, I hold, and have always held, to be of infinitely less moment than is generally supposed; but if life is to be, then it is common sense to amuse yourself with the best you can find where you happen to be placed. I am not leading precisely the life I should choose, but that which (all things considered, as well as I could consider them) appears to me to be the most eligible. I am resolved, therefore, to like it, and to reconcile myself to it; which is more manly than to feign myself above it, and to send up complaints by the post of being thrown away, and being desolate, and such like trash. I am prepared, therefore, either way. If the chances of life ever enable me to emerge, I will show you that I have not been wholly occupied by small and sordid pursuits. If (as the great probability is) I am come to the end of my career, I give myself up quietly to horticulture, etc. In short, if it be my lot to crawl, I will crawl contentedly; if to fly, I will fly

with alacrity; but as long as I can possibly avoid it, I will never be unhappy. If, with a pleasant wife, three children, a good house and farm, many books, and many friends, who wish me well, I cannot be happy, I am a very silly, foolish fellow, and what becomes of me is of very little consequence. I have at least this chance of doing well in Yorkshire, that I am heartily tired of London. I beg your pardon for saying so much of myself, but I say it upon this subject once for all. . . .

Death in Old Age

Sydney Smith to Lady Holland

Combe Florey, *September* 13, 1842.

It is a bore, I admit, to be past seventy, for you are left for execution, and are daily expecting the death-warrant; but, as you say, it is not anything very capital we quit. We are, at the close of life, only hurried away from stomach-aches, pains in the joints, from sleepless nights and unamusing days, from weakness, ugliness, and nervous tremors; but we shall all meet again in another planet, cured of all our defects. —— will be less irritable; —— more silent; —— will assent; Jeffrey will speak slower; Bobus will be just as he is; I shall be more respectful to the upper clergy; but I shall have as lively a sense as I now have of all your kindness and affection for me.

Sydney Smith.

He Hopes that His Ego will Survive

Robert Southey to Henry Taylor

Keswick, *July* 15, 1831.

Have you seen the strange book which Anastasius Hope left for publication, and which his representatives, in spite

of all dissuasion, have published? His notion of immortality and heaven is, that at the consummation of all things he, and you, and I, and John Murray, and Nebuchadnezzar, and Lambert the fat man, and the Hottentot Venus, and Thurtell, and Probert, and the twelve Apostles, and the noble martyrs, and Genghis Khan, and all his armies, and Noah with all his ancestors and all his posterity—yea, all men and all women, and all children that have ever been or ever shall be, saints and sinners alike—are all to be put together, and made into one great celestial eternal human being. He does not seem to have known how nearly this approaches Swedenborg's fancy. I do not like the scheme. I don't like the notion of being mixed up with Hume, and Hunt, and Whittle Harvey, and Philpotts, and Lord Althorpe, and the Huns, and the Hottentots, and the Jews, and the Philistines, and the Scotch, and the Irish. God forbid! I hope to be I myself; I, in an English heaven, with you yourself—you, and some others, without whom heaven would be no heaven to me. God bless you!

R. S.

Foreshadowings of the Ode on a Grecian Urn: that Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty—and that Both are Arrived at Through Sensation

John Keats to Benjamin Bailey

[*Postmark* Leatherhead, 22 *November,* 1817.]

I am certain of nothing but of the holiness of the Heart's affections, and the truth of Imagination. What the imagination seizes as Beauty must be Truth[1]—whether it existed before or not,—for I have the same idea of all our passions as of Love: they are all, in their sublime, creative of

[1] Compare this with the close of the Ode on a Grecian Urn.

essential Beauty. In a Word, you may know my favourite speculation by my first Book, and the little Song I sent in my last, which is a representation from the fancy of the probable mode of operating in these Matters. The Imagination may be compared to Adam's dream,—he awoke and found it truth:—I am more zealous in this affair, because I have never yet been able to perceive how anything can be known for truth by consecutive reasoning—and yet it must be. Can it be that even the greatest Philosopher ever arrived at his Goal without putting aside numerous objections? However it may be, O for a life of Sensations rather than of Thoughts! It is "a Vision in the form of Youth," a shadow of reality to come—and this consideration has further convinced me,—for it has come as auxiliary to another favourite speculation of mine,—that we shall enjoy ourselves hereafter by having what we called happiness on Earth repeated in a finer tone. And yet such a fate can only befall those who delight in Sensation, rather than hunger, as you do after Truth. Adam's dream will do here, and seems to be a Conviction that Imagination and its empyreal reflexion, is the same as human life and its spiritual repetition. But, as I was saying, the simple imaginative Mind may have its rewards in the repetition of its own silent Working coming continually on the Spirit with a fine Suddenness. To compare great things with

[1] See the Eighth Book of *Paradise Lost*:—

Under his forming hands a Creature grew,
Manlike, but different Sex, so lovely faire,
That what seem'd fair in all the World, seem'd now
Mean, or in her summ'd up. . . .
She disappeer'd, and left me dark, I wak'd
To find her, or for ever to deplore
Her loss, and other pleasures all abjure:
When out of hope, behold her, not far off,
Such as I saw her in my dream. . . .

small, have you never, by being surprised with an old Melody, in a delicious place by a delicious voice, *felt* over again your very speculations and surmises at the time it first operated on your soul? do you not remember forming to yourself the Singer's face—more beautiful than it was possible, and yet, with the elevation of the Moment, you did not think so? Even then you were mounted on the Wings of Imagination, so high that the prototype must be hereafter—that delicious face you will see. What a time! I am continually running away from the subject. Sure this cannot be exactly the case with a complex mind—one that is imaginative, and at the same time careful of its fruits,—who would exist partly on Sensation, partly on thought—to whom it is necessary that "years should bring the philosophic Mind"? Such a one I consider yours, and therefore it is necessary to your eternal happiness that you not only drink this old Wine of Heaven, which I shall call the redigestion of our most ethereal Musings upon Earth, but also increase in knowledge, and know all things.

. . . . . .

You perhaps at one time thought there was such a thing as worldly happiness to be arrived at, at certain periods of time marked out,—you have of necessity from your disposition been thus led away—I scarcely remember counting upon any happiness—I look not for it if it be not in the present hour,—nothing startles me beyond the moment. The Setting Sun will always set me to rights, or if a Sparrow come before my Window, I take part in its existence and pick about the gravel. The first thing that strikes me on hearing a misfortune having befallen another is this—"Well, it cannot be helped: he will have the pleasure of trying the resources of his Spirit"—and I beg now, my dear Bailey, that hereafter should you observe anything cold in me not to put it to the account of heart-

lessness, but abstraction—for I assure you I sometimes feel not the influence of a passion or affection during a whole Week—and so long this sometimes continues, I begin to suspect myself, and the genuineness of my feelings at other times—thinking them a few barren Tragedy Tears.

My brother Tom is much improved—he is going to Devonshire—whither I shall follow him. At present, I am just arrived at Dorking—to change the Scene—change the Air, and give me a spur to wind up my Poem, of which there are wanting 500 lines. I should have been here a day sooner, but the Reynoldses persuaded me to stop in Town to meet your friend Christie. There were Rice and Martin —we talked about Ghosts. I will have some Talk with Taylor, and let you know,—when please God I come down at Christmas. I will find the Examiner if possible. My best regards to Gleig, my Brothers' to you and Mrs. Bentley.

Your affectionate Friend,

JOHN KEATS.

THE WORLD CAN DO WITHOUT US

Lord Macaulay to Hannah M. Macaulay

London, *July* 31, 1833.

So Wilberforce is gone! We talk of burying him in Westminster Abbey; and many eminent men, both Whigs and Tories, are desirous to join in paying him this honour. There is, however, a story about a promise given to old Stephen that they should both lie in the same grave. Wilberforce kept his faculties, and, (except when he was actually in fits,) his spirits, to the very last. He was cheerful and full of anecdote only last Saturday. He owned that he enjoyed life much, and that he had a great desire to live longer. Strange in a man who had, I should have

said, so little to attach him to this world, and so firm a belief in another: in a man with an impaired fortune, a weak spine, and a worn-out stomach! What is this fascination which makes us cling to existence in spite of present sufferings and of religious hopes? Yesterday evening I called at the house in Cadogan Place, where the body is lying. I was truly fond of him: that is, "je l'aimais comme l'on aime." And how is that? How very little one human being generally cares for another! How very little the world misses anybody! How soon the chasm left by the best and wisest men closes! I thought, as I walked back from Cadogan Place, that our own selfishness when others are taken away ought to teach us how little others will suffer at losing us. I thought that, if I were to die to-morrow, not one of the fine people, whom I dine with every week, will take a côtelette aux petits pois the less on Saturday at the table to which I was invited to meet them, or will smile less gaily at the ladies over the champagne. And I am quite even with them. What are those pretty lines of Shelley?

> "Oh, world, farewell!
> Listen to the passing bell.
> It tells that thou and I must part
> With a light and heavy heart."

There are not ten people in the world whose deaths would spoil my dinner; but there are one or two whose deaths would break my heart. The more I see of the world, and the more numerous my acquaintance becomes, the narrower and more exclusive my affection grows, and the more I cling to my sisters, and to one or two old tried friends of my quiet days. But why should I go on preaching to you out of Ecclesiastes? And here comes, fortunately, to break the train of my melancholy reflections, the proof of my

East India Speech from Hansard: so I must put my letter aside, and correct the press. Ever yours,

T. B. M.

"I'll Admire the Wing of a Cock Sparrow as Much as the Pinion of an Archangel"

W. M. Thackeray to Mrs. Brookfield

[1849.]

I don't know about the unseen world; the use of the seen world is the right thing I'm sure! It is just as much God's world and creation as the kingdom of heaven with all the angels. How will you make yourself most happy in it? How secure at least the greatest amount of happiness compatible with your condition? by despising to-day and looking up cloudwards? Pish! Let us turn God's to-day to its best use, as well as any other part of the time He gives us. . . . The bounties of the Father I believe to be countless and inexhaustible for most of us here in life; love the greatest. Art (which is an exquisite and admiring sense of nature) the next.—By Jove! I'll admire, if I can, the wing of a cock sparrow as much as the pinion of an archangel; and adore God the Father of the earth, first; waiting for the completion of my senses, and the fulfilment of his intentions towards me afterwards, when the scene closes over us.

Advice to the Unmarried

Charlotte Brontë to Miss Ellen Nussey[1]

November 20th, 1840.

My dearest Nell,—That last letter of thine treated of matters so high and important I cannot delay answering it

[1] Charlotte Brontë's most intimate woman friend.

for a day. Now I am about to write thee a discourse, and a piece of advice which thou must take as if it came from thy grandmother. But in the first place, before I begin with thee, I have a word to whisper in the ear of Mr. Vincent, and I wish it could reach him. In the name of St. Chrysostom, St. Simon, and St. Jude, why does not that amiable young gentleman come forward like a man and say all that he has to say personally, instead of trifling with kinsmen and kinswomen. "Mr. Vincent," I say, "go personally, and say: 'Miss ——, I want to speak to you.' Miss —— will of course civilly answer: 'I am at your service, Mr. Vincent.' And then, when the room is cleared of all but yourself and herself, just take a chair nearer. Insist upon her laying down that silly . . . work, and listening to you. Then begin, in a clear, distinct, deferential, but determined voice: 'Miss ——, I have a question to put to you—a very important question: "Will you take me as your husband, for better, for worse. I am not a rich man, but I have sufficient to support us. I am not a great man, but I love you honestly and truly. Miss ——, if you knew the world better you would see that this is an offer not to be despised—a kind attached heart and a moderate competency." Do this, Mr. Vincent, and you may succeed. Go on writing sentimental and love-sick letters to ——, and I would not give sixpence for your suit." So much for Mr. Vincent. Now Miss ——'s turn comes to swallow the black bolus, called a friend's advice. Say to her: "Is the man a fool? is he a knave? a humbug, a hypocrite, a ninny, a noodle? If he is any or all of these, of course there is no sense in trifling with him. Cut him short at once—blast his hopes with lightning rapidity and keenness. Is he something better than this? has he at least common sense, a good disposition, a manageable temper? Then consider the matter. Say further: "You feel a

disgust towards him now—an utter repugnance. Very likely, but be so good as to remember you don't know him; you have only had three or four days' acquaintance with him. Longer and closer intimacy might reconcile you to a wonderful extent. And now I'll tell you a word of truth, at which you may be offended or not as you like." Say to her: "From what I know of your character, and I think I know it pretty well, I should say you will never love before marriage. After that ceremony is over, and after you have had some months to settle down, and to get accustomed to the creature you have taken for your worse half, you will probably make a most affectionate and happy wife; even if the individual should not prove all you could wish, you will be indulgent toward his little follies and foibles, and will not feel much annoyance at them. This will especially be the case if he should have sense sufficient to allow you to guide him in important matters." Say also: "I hope you will not have the romantic folly to wait for what the French call 'une grande passion.' My good girl, 'une grande passion' is 'une grande folie.' Mediocrity in all things is wisdom; mediocrity in the sensations is superlative wisdom." Say to her: "When you are as old as I am (I am sixty at least, being your grandmother), you will find that the majority of those worldly precepts, whose seeming coldness shocks and repels us in youth, are founded in wisdom."

No girl should fall in love till the offer is actually made. This maxim is just. I will even extend and confirm it: No young lady should fall in love till the offer has been made, accepted, the marriage ceremony performed, and the first half-year of wedded life has passed away. A woman may then begin to love, but with great precaution, very coolly, very moderately, very rationally. If she ever loves so much that a harsh word or a cold look cuts her to

the heart she is a fool. If she ever loves so much that her husband's will is her law, and that she has got into a habit of watching his looks in order that she may anticipate his wishes, she will soon be a neglected fool.

That all Men and Women are but Dust and Ashes —a Spark of Divinity Now and Then Kindling in the Dull Heap—that is All

Charlotte Brontë to W. S. Williams

Haworth, *October 6th,* 1848.

My dear Sir—I thank you for your last truly friendly letter, and for the number of *Blackwood* which accompanied it. Both arrived at a time when a relapse of illness had depressed me much. Both did me good, especially the letter. I have only one fault to find with your expressions of friendship: they make me ashamed, because they seem to imply that you think better of me than I merit. I believe you are prone to think too highly of your fellow-creatures in general—to see too exclusively the good points of those for whom you have a regard. Disappointment must be the inevitable result of this habit. Believe all men, and women too, to be dust and ashes—a spark of the divinity now and then kindling in the dull heap—that is all. When I looked on the noble face and forehead of my dead brother[1] (nature had favoured him with a fairer outside, as well as a finer constitution, than his sisters) and asked myself what had made him go ever wrong, tend ever downwards, when he had so many gifts to induce to,

[1] Patrick Branwell Brontë, the only brother of the three Brontë sisters, who, by his dissipated life, wasted talents, and early death, brought so much sorrow into his sisters' lives. [1817-1848.]

and aid in, an upward course, I seemed to receive an oppressive revelation of the feebleness of humanity—of the inadequacy of even genius to lead to true greatness if unaided by religion and principle. In the value, or even the reality, of these two things he would never believe till within a few days of his end; and then all at once he seemed to open his heart to a conviction of their existence and worth. The remembrance of this strange change now comforts my poor father greatly. I myself, with painful, mournful joy, heard him praying softly in his dying moments; and to the last prayer which my father offered up at his bedside he added, "Amen." How unusual that word appeared from his lips, of course you, who did not know him, cannot conceive. Akin to this alteration was that in his feelings toward his relations—all the bitterness seemed gone.

When the struggle was over, and a marble calm began to succeed the last dread agony, I felt, as I had never felt before, that there was peace and forgiveness for him in Heaven. All his errors—to speak plainly, all his vices—seemed nothing to me in that moment: every wrong he had done, every pain he had caused, vanished; his sufferings only were remembered; the wrench to the natural affections only was left. If man can thus experience total oblivion of his fellow's imperfections, how much more can the Eternal Being, who made man, forgive His creature?

Had his sins been scarlet in their dye, I believe now they are white as wool. He is at rest, and that comforts us all. Long before he quitted this world, life had no happiness for him.

Blackwood's mention of *Jane Eyre* gratified me much, and will gratify me more, I dare say, when the ferment of other feelings than that of literary ambition shall have a little subsided in my mind.

The doctor has told me I must not expect too rapid a restoration to health; but to-day I certainly feel better. I am thankful to say my father has hitherto stood the storm well; and so have my *dear* sisters, to whose untiring care and kindness I am chiefly indebted for my present state of convalescence.—Believe me, my dear sir, yours faithfully, C. Brontë.

That Man is Lost in the Antiquity of Time

Edward FitzGerald to E. B. Cowell

[1847.]

Dear Cowell,

I am only got half way in the third book of Thucydides: but I go on with pleasure; with as much pleasure as I used to read a novel. I have also again taken up my Homer. That is a noble and affecting passage where Diomed and Glaucus, being about to fight, recognise each other as old family friends, exchange arms, and vow to avoid each other henceforth in the fray. (N. B. and this is the tenth year of the war!) After this comes, you know, the meeting of Hector and Andromache, which we read together; altogether a truly Epic canto indeed.

Yet, as I often think, it is not the poetical imagination, but bare Science that every day more and more unrolls a greater Epic than the Iliad; the history of the World, the infinitudes of Space and Time! I never take up a book of Geology or Astronomy but this strikes me. And when we think that Man must go on to discover in the same plodding way, one fancies that the Poet of to-day may as well fold his hands, or turn them to dig and delve, considering how soon the march of discovery will distance all his imaginations, (and) dissolve the language in which

they are uttered. Martial, as you say, lives now, after two thousand years; a space that seems long to us whose lives are so brief; but a moment, the twinkling of an eye, if compared (not to Eternity alone) but to the ages which it is now known the world must have existed, and (unless for some external violence) must continue to exist. Lyell in his book about America, says that the falls of Niagara, if (as seems certain) they have worked their way back southwards for seven miles, must have taken over 35,000 years to do so, at the rate of something over a foot a year! Sometimes they fall back on a stratum that crumbles away from behind them more easily: but then again they have to roll over rock that yields to them scarcely more perceptibly than the anvil to the serpent. And those very soft strata which the Cataract now erodes contain evidences of a race of animals, and of the action of seas washing over them, long before Niagara came to have a distinct current; and the rocks were compounded ages and ages before those strata! So that, as Lyell says, the Geologist looking at Niagara forgets even the roar of its waters in the contemplation of the awful processes of time that it suggests. It is not only that this vision of Time must wither the Poet's hope of immortality; but it is in itself more wonderful than all the conceptions of Dante and Milton.

As to your friend Pliny, I don't think that Time can use his usual irony on that saying about Martial. [1] Pliny evidently only suggests that "at non erunt æterna quæ scripsit" as a question of his correspondent; to which he himself replies "Non erunt *fortasse*." Your Greek quotations are very graceful. I should like to read Busbequius. Do you think Tacitus *affected* in style, as people now say he is?

[1] Pliny, Ep. III., 21.

"We Bid You to Hope"

James Smetham[1] *to Mrs. Taylor*

Many best wishes to you at the beginning of 1861. I hope it may be the happiest year of your life, as I think each succeeding year of everybody's life should be, if only everybody were wise enough to see things as they are; for it is certain that there really exists, laid up and ready to hand, for those who will just lay hands upon it, enough for every one and enough for ever.

[1] James Smetham, born at Pately Bridge, Yorkshire, was the son of a Methodist preacher. On leaving school, he was articled to an architect in Lincoln, but was by him released at the end of three years that he might become a portrait-painter. In 1843 he entered the Royal Academy as a probationer; exhibited at Liverpool in 1847, at the Academy in 1851-52-53 and '54, but had no real success. While at the Academy he made the acquaintanceship of D. G. Rossetti, which later grew into a friendship which endured throughout his life. In 1854 he was discovered by Ruskin, who became his most valuable adviser and most permanent admirer. For all his talents, the highest position which he could gain was that of drawing-master at the Wesleyan Normal School, Westminster. In 1854 he married. From 1863 he became one of Rossetti's most intimate associates, spending every Wednesday morning in his studio painting, and the evening either at the studio of one of the Pre-raphaelite's distinguished circle of brethren, or at Rossetti's own house, where he remained until the following day. This continued until 1868, when Rossetti's failing eyesight drove him into the country from the town. Smetham was an artist of splendid interpretative originality—a detailed originality which required too much brains to be popularly admired; therefore he failed. Brilliant in every way, he was most brilliant in his letters, which were for him his most real form of self-expression. In them he has recorded the impressions of each exquisite moment, and has raised, as he himself has said, the true monument of his noble, uncomplaining life.

I am quite sure that the central mistake of all lives that are mistaken is the not taking this simple unchangeable fact for granted, not seeing that it is so, and cannot but be so, and will remain so "though we believe not." A man in prison, with a signed and sealed permission to leave it and walk at liberty lying on the table beside him, untouched, unopened, yet bemoaning himself and unhappy in his cell, is just the image of us unbelievers who have even a fragment of unhappiness about us. I think I can trace every scrap of sorrow in my own life to this simple unbelief. How could I be anything but quite happy if I believed always that all the past is forgiven and all the present furnished with power, and all the future bright with hope, because of the same abiding facts, which don't change with my mood, do not crumble, because I totter and stagger at the promise through unbelief, but stand firm and clear with their peaks of pearl cleaving the air of Eternity, and the bases of their hills rooted unfathomably in the Rock of God?

Mont Blanc does not become a phantom or a mist because a climber grows dizzy on its sides, and yet we make mistakes just as great as if we fancied, being climbers, that it did.

He Explains His Religion of Kindness

Robert Louis Stevenson to his Mother

[Hôtel Belvedere, Davos, *December* 26, 1880.]

My dear Mother,—I was very tired yesterday and could not write; tobogganed so furiously all morning; we had a delightful day, crowned by an incredible dinner—more courses than I have fingers on my hands. Your letter arrived duly at night, and I thank you for it as I should. You need not suppose I am at all insensible to my father's

extraordinary kindness about this book; he is a brick; I vote for him freely.

. . . The assurance you speak of is what we all ought to have, and might have, and should not consent to live without. That people do not have it more than they do is, I believe, because persons speak so much in large-drawn, theological similitudes, and won't say out what they mean about life, and man, and God, in fair and square human language. I wonder if you or my father ever thought of the obscurities that lie upon human duty from the negative form in which the Ten Commandments are stated, or of how Christ was so continually substituting affirmations. "Thou shalt not" is but an example; "Thou shalt" is the law of God. It was this that seems meant in the phrase that "not one jot nor tittle of the law should pass." But what led me to the remark is this: A kind of black, angry look goes with that statement of the law of negatives. "To love one's neighbour as oneself" is certainly much harder, but states life so much more actively, gladly, and kindly, that you can begin to see some pleasure in it; and till you can see pleasure in these hard choices and bitter necessities, where is there any Good News to men? It is much more important to do right than not to do wrong; further, the one is possible, the other has always been and will ever be impossible; and the faithful *design to do right* is accepted by God; that seems to me to be the Gospel, and that was how Christ delivered us from the Law. After people are told that, surely they might hear more encouraging sermons. To blow the trumpet for good would seem the Parson's business; and since it is not in our own strength, but by faith and perseverance (no account made of slips), that we are to run the race, I do not see where they get the material for their gloomy discourses. Faith is not to believe the Bible, but to believe in God; if

you believe in God (or, for it's the same thing, have that assurance you speak about), where is there any more room for terror? There are only three possible attitudes—Optimism, which has gone to smash; Pessimism, which is on the rising hand, and very popular with many clergymen who seem to think they are Christians; and this Faith, which is the Gospel. Once you hold the last, it is your business (1) to find out what is right in any given case, and (2) to try to do it; if you fail in the last, that is by commission, Christ tells you to hope; if you fail in the first, that is by omission, his picture of the last day gives you but a black lookout. The whole necessary morality is kindness; and it should spring, of itself, from the one fundamental doctrine, Faith. If you are sure that God, in the long run, means kindness by you, you should be happy; and if happy, surely you should be kind. I beg your pardon for this long discourse; it is not all right, of course, but I am sure there is something in it. One thing I have not got clearly; that about the omission and the commission; but there is truth somewhere about it, and I have no time to clear it just now. Do you know, you have had about a *Cornhill* page of sermon? It is, however, true.

III

One Day in His Life

The poet's approach to Oxford.

Alexander Pope (1688-1744)

With Virgil in the country.

Thomas Gray (1716-1771)

The old home is re-visited.

Horace Walpole (1717-1797)

The false dawn.

Charles Lamb (1775-1835)

His lordship contemplates death.

Lord Byron (1788-1824)

The pool where a poet bathed.

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822)

"Ripe was the drowsy hour;
The blissful cloud of summer-indolence
Benumb'd my eyes."

John Keats (1795-1821)

A visit to Shakespeare's birth-place.

Benjamin Robert Haydon (1786-1846)

The emigrant ship.

William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863)

On the banks of the Thames with Boz.

Charles Dickens (1812-1870)

His last letter to his mother before her death.

Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881)

Reading Tacitus and listening to the nightingale.

Edward FitzGerald (1809-1883)

"If the year were an orchestra, to-day would be the
Flute-tone in it."

Sidney Lanier (1842-1881)

The Poet's Approach to Oxford

Alexander Pope to Mrs. Martha Blount

[1716.]

Nothing could have more of that melancholy which once used to please me, than my last day's journey; for, after having passed through my favourite woods in the forest, with a thousand reveries of past pleasures, I rid over hanging hills, whose tops were edged with groves, and whose feet watered with winding rivers, listening to the falls of cataracts below, and the murmuring of the winds above; the gloomy verdure of Stonor succeeded to these, and the shades of evening overtook me. The moon rose in the clearest sky I ever saw, by whose solemn light I paced on slowly, without company, or any interruption to the range of my thoughts. About a mile before I reached Oxford, all the bells tolled in different notes; the clocks of every college answered one another, and sounded forth—some in deeper, some in a softer tone—that it was eleven at night. All this was no ill preparation to the life I have led since among those old walls, venerable galleries, stone porticos, studious walks, and solitary scenes of the university. I wanted nothing but a black gown and a salary, to be as mere a book-worm as any there. I conformed myself to the college-hours, was rolled up in books, lay in one of the most ancient, dusky parts of the university, and was as dead to the world as any hermit of the desert. If anything was alive or awake in me, it was a little vanity, such as even those good men used to entertain, when the

monks of their own order extolled their piety and abstraction. For I found myself received with a sort of respect, which this idle part of mankind, the learned, pay to their own species; who are as considerable here, as the busy, gay, and the ambitious are in your world.

With Virgil in the Country

Gray to Horace Walpole

I was hindered in my last, and so could not give you all the trouble I would have done. The description of a road, which your coach wheels have so often honoured, it would be needless to give you; suffice it that I arrived safe at my uncle's, who is a great hunter in imagination; his dogs take up every chair in the house, so I am forced to stand at this present writing; and though the gout forbids him galloping after them in the field, yet he continues still to regale his ears and nose with their comfortable noise and stink. He holds me mighty cheap, I perceive, for walking when I should ride, and reading when I should hunt. My comfort amidst all this is, that I have at the distance of half a mile, through a lane green, a forest (the vulgar call it a common) all my own, at least as good as so, for I spy no human thing in it but myself. It is a little chaos of mountains and precipices; mountains, it is true, that do not ascend much above the clouds, nor are the declivities quite so amazing as Dover cliff; but just such hills as people who love their necks as well as I do may venture to climb, and crags that give the eye as much pleasure as if they were more dangerous. Both vale and hill are covered with most venerable beeches, and other very reverent vegetables, that, like most other ancient people, are always dreaming out their old stories to the winds,

> And as they bow their hoary tops relate,
> In murm'ring sounds, the dark decrees of fate;
> While visions, as poetic eyes avow,
> Cling to each leaf, and swarm on every bough.

At the foot of one of these squats ME I (*il penseroso*), and there grow to the trunk for a whole morning. The timorous hare and sporting squirrel gambol around me like Adam in Paradise, before he had an Eve; but I think he did not use to read Virgil, as I commonly do there. In this situation I often converse with my Horace, aloud, too, that is, talk to you, but I do not remember that I ever heard you answer me. I beg pardon for taking all the conversation to myself, but it is entirely your own fault. We have old Mr. Southern at a gentleman's house a little way off, who often comes to see us; he is now seventy-seven years old, and has almost wholly lost his memory; but is as agreeable as an old man can be, at least I persuade myself so when I look at him, and think of Isabella and Oroonoko. I shall be in town in about three weeks. Adieu.

September 1737

The Old Home is Re-visited

Horace Walpole to George Montague, Esq.

Houghton, *March* 25, 1761.

Here I am at Houghton! and alone! in this spot, where (except two hours last month) I have not been in sixteen years! Think, what a crowd of reflections! No, Gray, and forty church-yards, could not furnish so many; nay, I know one must feel them with greater indifference than I possess, to have patience to put them into verse. Here I am, probably for the last time of my life, though not for the last time: every clock that strikes tells me I am an hour nearer to yonder church—that church, into which I have

not yet had courage to enter, where lies that mother on whom I doated, and who doated on me! There are the two rival mistresses of Houghton, neither of whom ever wished to enjoy it! There, too, lies he,[1] who founded its greatness, to contribute to whose fall Europe was embroiled; there he sleeps in quiet and dignity, while his friend and his foe, rather his false ally and real enemy, Newcastle and Bath, are exhausting the dregs of their pitiful lives in squabbles and pamphlets.

The surprise the pictures gave me is again renewed; accustomed for many years to see nothing but wretched daubs and varnished copies at auctions, I look at these as enchantment. My own description of them seems poor; but shall I tell you truly, the majesty of Italian ideas almost sinks before the warm nature of Flemish colouring. Alas! don't I grow old? My young imagination was fired with Guido's ideas; must they be plump and prominent as Abishag to warm me now? Doth great youth feel with poetic limbs, as well as see with poetic eyes? In one respect, I am very young, I cannot satiate myself with looking: an incident contributed to make me feel this more strongly. A party arrived, just as I did, to see the house, a man and three women in riding dresses, and they rode post through the apartments. I could not hurry before them fast enough; they were not so long in seeing for the first time, as I could have been in one room, to examine what I knew by heart. I remember formerly being often diverted with this kind of *seers;* they come, ask what such a room is called, in which sir Robert lay, write it down, admire a lobster or a cabbage in a market-piece, dispute whether the last room was green or purple, and then hurry to the inn for fear the fish should be over-dressed. How

[1] Sir Robert Walpole, afterwards Earl of Orford, of whom Horace Walpole was the third son.

different my sensations! not a picture here but recalls a history; not one, but I remember in Downing-street or Chelsea, where queens and crowds admired them, though seeing them as little as these travellers!

When I had drank tea, I strolled into the garden; they told me it was now called the *pleasure-ground.* What a dissonant idea of pleasure! those groves, those *allées,* where I have passed so many charming moments are now stripped up or overgrown—many fond paths I could not unravel, though with a very exact clew in my memory: I met two gamekeepers, and a thousand hares! In the days when all my soul was tuned to pleasure and vivacity (and you will think, perhaps, it is far from being out of tune yet), I hated Houghton and its solitude; yet I loved this garden, as now, with many regrets, I love Houghton; Houghton, I know not what to call it, a monument of grandeur or ruin! How I have wished this evening for lord Bute! how I could preach to him! For myself, I do not want to be preached to; I have long considered how every Balbec must wait for the chance of a Mr. Wood. The servants wanted to lay me in the great apartment—what, to make me pass my night as I have done my evening. It were like proposing to Margaret Roper to be a duchess in the court that cut off her father's head, and imagining it would please her. I have chosen to sit in my father's little dressing-room, and am now by his scrutoire, where, in the height of his fortune, he used to receive the accounts of his farmers and deceive himself, or us, with the thoughts of his economy. How wise a man at once, and how weak! For what has he built Houghton? for his grandson to annihilate, or for his son to mourn over. If lord Burleigh could rise and view his representative driving the Hatfield stage, he would feel as I feel now. Poor little Strawberry! at least it will not be stripped to pieces by a descendant! You will find

all these fine meditations dictated by pride, not by philosophy. Pray consider through how many mediums philosophy must pass, before it is purified—

"how often must it weep, how often burn!"

My mind was extremely prepared for all this gloom by parting with Mr. Conway yesterday morning; moral reflections or common-places are the livery one likes to wear, when one has just had a real misfortune. He is going to Germany: I was glad to dress myself up in transitory Houghton, in lieu of very sensible concern. To-morrow I shall be distracted with thoughts, at least images, of very different complexion. I go to Lynn, and am to be elected on Friday. I shall return hither on Saturday, again alone, to expect Burleighides on Sunday, whom I left at Newmarket. I must once in my life see him on his grandfather's throne.

Epping, Monday night, thirty first.—No, I have not seen him; he loitered on the road, and I was kept at Lynn till yesterday morning. It is plain I never knew for how many trades I was formed, when at this time of day I can begin electioneering, and succeed in my new vocation. Think of me, the subject of a mob, who was scarce ever before in a mob, addressing them in the town-hall, riding at the head of two thousand people through such a town as Lynn, dining with above two hundred of them amid bumpers, huzzas, songs, and tobacco, and finishing with country dancing at a ball and sixpenny whisk! I have borne it all cheerfully; nay, have sat hours in *conversation,* the thing upon earth that I hate; have been to hear misses play on the harpsichord, and to see an alderman's copies of Rubens and Carlo Marat. Yet to do the folks justice, they are sensible, and reasonable, and civilized; their very language is polished since I lived among them. I attribute this to

their more frequent intercourse with the world and the capital, by the help of good roads and post-chaises, which, if they have abridged the king's dominions, have at least tamed his subjects. Well, how comfortable it will be to-morrow, to see my parroquet, to play at loo, and not be obliged to talk seriously! The Heraclitus of the beginning of this letter will be overjoyed on finishing it to sign himself your old friend, DEMOCRITUS.

P.S.—I forgot to tell you that my ancient aunt Hammond came over to Lynn to see me; not from any affection, but curiosity. The first thing she said to me, though we have not met these sixteen years, was, "Child, you have done a thing to-day that your father never did in all his life; you sat as they carried you, he always stood the whole time." "Madam," said I, "when I am placed in a chair, I conclude I am to sit in it; besides, as I cannot imitate my father in great things, I am not at all ambitious of mimicking him in little ones." I am sure she proposes to tell her remarks to my uncle Horace's ghost the instant they meet.

THE FALSE DAWN

I

PROPOSAL

Charles Lamb to Miss Kelly[1]

20 *July*, 1819.

DEAR MISS KELLY,

We had the pleasure, pain I might better call it, of see-

[1] Frances Maria Kelly was born in 1790, and was thus Charles Lamb's junior by fifteen years. After a somewhat harsh childhood, she emerged as a popular actress, the artistic successor

ing you last night in the new Play. It was a most consummate piece of Acting, but what a task for you to undergo! at a time when your heart is sore from real sorrow! it has given rise to a train of thinking, which I cannot suppress.

Would to God you were released from this way of life; that you could bring your mind to consent to take your lot with us, and throw off for ever the whole burden of your Profession. I neither expect or wish you to take notice of this which I am writing, in your present over occupied and hurried state. But to think of it at your leisure. I have quite income enough, if that were all, to justify for me making such a proposal, with what I may call even a handsome provision for my survivor. What you possess of your own would naturally be appropriated to those, for whose sakes chiefly you have made so many hard sacrifices. I am not so foolish as not to know that I am a most unworthy match for such a one as you, but you have for years been a principal object in my mind. In many a sweet assumed character I have learned to love you, but simply as F. M. Kelly I love you better than them all. Can you quit these shadows of existence, and come and be a reality to us? Can you leave off harassing yourself to please a thankless multitude, who knows nothing of you, and begin at last to live to yourself and your friends?

to Mrs. Jordan and première comédienne of her time. In 1819 Lamb was forty-four years of age and in receipt of a salary of £600; Miss Kelly was twenty-nine and was engaged at the English Opera House. Lamb's great work as an English classic as yet lay all before him. It is interesting to speculate on how much the world gained or lost by the events of this one day—all three letters were written and answered on the 20th of July. His stutter saved him from the Church; from how much did this refusal save him? Charles Lamb as a married man could never have been the Elia of to-day; Elia was in all things a bachelor.

As plainly and frankly as I have seen you give or refuse assent in some feigned scene, so frankly do me the justice to answer me. It is impossible I should feel injured or aggrieved by your telling me at once, that the proposal does not suit you. It is impossible that I should ever think of molesting you with idle importunity and persecution after your mind (is) once firmly spoken—but happier, far happier, could I have leave to hope a time might come, when our friends might be your friends; our interests yours; our book-knowledge, if in that inconsiderable particular we have any little advantage, might impart something to you, which you would every day have it in your power ten thousand fold to repay by the added cheerfulness and joy which you could not fail to bring as a dowry into whatever family should have the honour and happiness of receiving *you,* the most welcome accession that could be made to it.

In haste, but with entire respect and deepest affection, I subscribe myself

C. Lamb.

II

Refusal

Miss Kelly to Charles Lamb

Henrietta Street, *July 20th,* 1819.

An early and deeply rooted attachment has fixed my heart on one from whom no worldly prospect can well induce me to withdraw it, but while I thus frankly and decidedly decline your proposal, believe me, I am not insensible to the high honour which the preference of such a mind as yours confers upon me—let me, however, hope that all thought upon this subject will end with this letter, and that you will henceforth encourage no other sentiment

towards me than esteem in my private character and a continuance of that approbation of my humble talents which you have already expressed so much and so often to my advantage and gratification.

Believe me I feel proud to acknowledge myself

Your obliged friend,

F. M. Kelly.

III

Resignation

Charles Lamb to Miss Kelly

July 20th, 1819.

Dear Miss Kelly,

Your injunctions shall be obeyed to a tittle. I feel myself in a lackadaisical no-how-ish kind of a humour. I believe it is the rain, or something. I had thought to have written seriously, but I fancy I succeed best in epistles of mere fun; puns and *that* nonsense. You will be good friends with us, will you not? Let what has past "break no bones" between us. You will not refuse us them next time we send for them?[1]

Yours very truly,

C. L.

His Lordship Contemplates Death

Lord Byron to John Murray

Bologna, *June 7*, 1819.

I have been picture-gazing this morning at the famous Domenichino and Guido, both of which are superlative. I

[1] "*Bones*" refers to the small ivory discs which were given by the management of a theatre to friends, entitling them to free admission.

afterwards went to the beautiful cemetery of Bologna, beyond the walls, and found, besides the superb burial-ground, an original of a Custode, who reminded me of the grave-digger in Hamlet. He has a collection of capuchins' skulls, labelled on the forehead, and taking down one of them said, "This was Brother Desiderio Berro, who died at forty—one of my best friends. I begged his head of his brethren after his decease, and they gave it me. I put it in lime, and then boiled it. Here it is, teeth and all, in excellent preservation. He was the merriest, cleverest fellow I ever knew. Wherever he went, he brought joy; and whenever any one was melancholy, the sight of him was enough to make him cheerful again. He walked so actively, you might have taken him for a dancer—he joked —he laughed—oh! he was such a Frate as I never saw before, nor ever shall again."

He told me that he had himself planted all the cypresses in the cemetery; that he had the greatest attachment to them and to his dead people; that since 1801 they had buried fifty-three thousand persons. In showing some older monuments, there was that of a Roman girl of twenty, with a bust by Bernini. She was a princess Bartorini, dead two centuries ago: he said that, on opening her grave, they had found her hair complete, and "as yellow as gold." Some of the epitaphs at Ferrara pleased me more than the more splendid monuments at Bologna; for instance:—

Martini Luigi
Implora pace.
Lucrezia Picini
Implora eterna quiete.

Can anything be more full of pathos? Those few words say all that can be said or sought: the dead had had enough of life; all they wanted was rest, and this they *implore!*

There is all the helplessness, and humble hope, and death-like prayer, that can arise from the grave—" implora pace." I hope, whoever may survive me, and shall see me put in the foreigners' burying-ground at the Lido, within the fortress by the Adriatic, will see those two words, and no more, put over me. I trust they won't think of " pickling, and bringing me home to Clod or Blunderbuss Hall." I am sure my bones would not rest in an English grave, or my clay mix with the earth of that country. I believe the thought would drive me mad on my deathbed, could I suppose that any of my friends would be base enough to convey my carcass back to your soil. I would not even feed your worms, if I could help it.[1]

So, as Shakespeare says of Mowbray, the banished Duke of Norfolk, who died at Venice (see Richard II.), that he, after fighting

> Against black Pagans, Turks, and Saracens,
> And toiled with works of war, retired himself
> To Italy, and there, at *Venice*, gave
> His body to that *pleasant* country's earth,
> And his pure soul unto his captain, Christ,
> Under whose colours he had fought so long.

Before I left Venice, I had returned to you your late, and Mr. Hobhouse's sheets of Juan. Don't wait for further answers from me, but address yours to Venice, as usual. I know nothing of my own movements; I may return there in a few days, or not for some time. All this depends on circumstances. I left Mr. Hoppner very well, as well as his son and Mrs. Hoppner. My daughter Allegra[2] was well too, and is growing pretty; her hair is

[1] Byron died in 1824 at Missolonghi, whence his body was brought home to England and buried in the church of Hucknall-Torkard, near Newstead.

[2] His illegitimate daughter by Claire Clairmont.

growing darker, and her eyes are blue. Her temper and her ways, Mr. Hoppner says, are like mine, as well as her features: she will make, in that case, a manageable young lady.

I have never heard anything of Ada,[1] the little Electra of my Mycenæ. But there will come a day of reckoning, even if I should not live to see it. What a long letter I have scribbled!

Yours, etc.

PS.—Here, as in Greece, they strew flowers on the tombs. I saw a quantity of rose-leaves, and entire roses, scattered over the graves at Ferrara. It has the most pleasing effect you can imagine.

The Pool Where a Poet Bathed

Percy Bysshe Shelley to T. L. Peacock

Bagni di Lucca, *July* 25, 1818.

My Dear Peacock,—I received on the same day your letters marked five and six, the one directed to Pisa, and the other to Livorno, and I can assure you they are most welcome visitors.

Our life here is as unvaried by any external events as if we were at Marlow, where a sail up the river or a journey to London makes an epoch. Since I last wrote to you, I have ridden over to Lucca, once with Claire, and once alone; and we have been over to the Casino, where I cannot say there is anything remarkable, the women being far removed from anything which the most liberal annotator could interpret into beauty or grace, and apparently possessing no intellectual excellencies to compensate the

[1] His daughter, by Lady Byron, born in December, 1815.

deficiency. I assure you it is well that it is so, for these dances, especially the waltz, are so exquisitely beautiful that it would be a little dangerous to the newly unfrozen senses and imaginations of us migrators from the neighbourhood of the Pole. As it is—except in the dark—there could be no peril. The atmosphere here, unlike that of the rest of Italy, is diversified with clouds, which grow in the middle of the day, and sometimes bring thunder and lightning, and hail about the size of a pigeon's egg, and decrease towards the evening, leaving only those finely woven webs of vapour which we see in English skies, and flocks of fleecy and slowly-moving clouds, which all vanish before sunset; and the nights are for ever serene, and we see a star in the east at sunset—I think it is Jupiter—almost as fine as Venus was last summer; but it wants a certain silver and aerial radiance, and soft yet piercing splendour, which belongs, I suppose, to the latter planet by virtue of its at once divine and female nature. I have forgotten to ask the ladies if Jupiter produces on them the same effect. I take great delight in watching the changes of the atmosphere. In the evening Mary and I often take a ride, for horses are cheap in this country. In the middle of the day, I bathe in a pool or fountain, formed in the middle of the forests by a torrent. It is surrounded on all sides by precipitous rocks, and the waterfall of the stream which forms it falls into it on one side with perpetual dashing. Close to it, on the top of the rocks, are alders, and, above, the great chestnut trees, whose long and pointed leaves pierce the deep blue sky in strong relief. The water of this pool, which, to venture an unrhythmical paraphrase, is "sixteen feet long and ten feet wide," is as transparent as the air, so that the stones and sand at the bottom seem, as it were, trembling in the light of noonday. It is exceedingly cold also. My custom is to undress and

sit on the rocks, reading Herodotus, until the perspiration has subsided, and then to leap from the edge of the rock into this fountain—a practice in the hot weather exceedingly refreshing. This torrent is composed, as it were, of a succession of pools and waterfalls, up which I sometimes amuse myself by climbing when I bathe, and receiving the spray all over my body, whilst I clamber up the moist crags with difficulty. . . .

"Ripe was the drowsy hour;
The blissful cloud of summer-indolence
Benumb'd my eyes"

John Keats to John Hamilton Reynolds

[*Postmark,* Hampstead, 19 *February,* 1818.]

My dear Reynolds,

I had an idea that a Man might pass a very pleasant life in this manner—let him on a certain day read a certain Page of full Poesy or distilled Prose, and let him wander with it, and muse upon it, and reflect upon it, and bring home to it, and prophesy upon it, and dream upon it, until it becomes stale—but when will it do so? Never. When Man has arrived at a certain ripeness in intellect any one grand and spiritual passage serves him as a starting-post towards all "the two-and-thirty Palaces." How happy is such a voyage of conception, what delicious diligent Indolence! A doze upon a sofa does not hinder it, and a nap upon Clover engenders ethereal finger-pointings—the prattle of a child gives it wings, and the converse of middle-age a strength to beat them—a strain of music conducts to "an odd angle of the Isle," and when the leaves whisper it puts a girdle round the earth. Nor will this sparing touch of noble Books be any irreverence to their Writers—

for perhaps the honours paid by Man to Man are trifles in comparison to the Benefit done by great Works to the "Spirit and pulse" of good by their mere passive existence. Memory should not be called Knowledge. Many have original minds who do not think it—they are led away by Custom. Now it appears to me that almost any Man may like the spider spin from his own inwards his own airy Citadel—the points of leaves and twigs on which the spider begins her work are few, and she fills the air with a beautiful circuiting. Man should be content with as few points to tip with the fine Web of his Soul, and weave a tapestry empyrean full of symbols for his spiritual eye, of softness for his spiritual touch, of space for his wandering, of distinctness for his luxury. But the Minds of Mortals are so different and bent on such diverse journeys that it may at first appear impossible for any common taste and fellowship to exist between two or three under these suppositions. It is however quite the contrary. Minds would leave each other in contrary directions, traverse each other in numberless points, and at last greet each other at the journey's end. An old Man and a child would talk together and the old Man be led on his path and the child left thinking. Man should not dispute or assert but whisper results to his neighbour and thus by every germ of spirit sucking the sap from mould ethereal every human might become great, and Humanity instead of being a wide heath of Furze and Briars with here and there a remote Oak or Pine, would become a grand democracy of Forest Trees! It has been an old comparison for our urging on—the Beehive; however, it seems to me that we should rather be the flower than the Bee—for it is a false notion that more is gained by receiving than giving—no, the receiver and the giver are equal in their benefits. The flower, I doubt not, receives a fair guerdon from the Bee

—its leaves blush deeper in the next spring—and who shall say between Man and Woman which is the most delighted? Now it is more noble to sit like Jove than to fly like Mercury—let us not therefore go hurrying about and collecting honey, bee-like buzzing here and there impatiently from a knowledge of what is to be aimed at; but let us open our leaves like a flower and be passive and receptive—budding patiently under the eye of Apollo and taking hints from every noble insect that favours us with a visit—sap will be given us for meat and dew for drink. I was led into these thoughts, my dear Reynolds, by the beauty of the morning operating on a sense of Idleness—I have not read any Books—the Morning said I was right—I had no idea but of the morning, and the thrush said I was right—seeming to say,

> "O thou whose face hath felt the Winter's wind,
> Whose eye has seen the snow-clouds hung in mist,
> And the black elm-tops 'mong the freezing stars,
> To thee the Spring will be a harvest-time.
> O thou, whose only book has been the light
> Of supreme darkness which thou feddest on
> Night after night when Phœbus was away,
> To thee the Spring shall be a triple morn.
> O fret not after knowledge—I have none,
> And yet my song comes native with the warmth.
> O fret not after knowledge—I have none,
> And yet the Evening listens. He who saddens
> At thought of idleness cannot be idle,
> And he's awake who thinks himself asleep."

Now I am sensible all this is a mere sophistication (however it may neighbour to any truths), to excuse my own indolence—so I will not deceive myself that Man should be equal with Jove—but think himself very well off as a sort of scullion-Mercury, or even a humble Bee. It is no

matter whether I am right or wrong, either one way or another, if there is sufficient to lift a little time from your shoulders.

Your affectionate friend
JOHN KEATS.

A VISIT TO SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTH-PLACE

Benjamin Robert Haydon to Miss Mitford

31*st August*, 1828.

I have been longing to write to you since I made a pilgrimage to Stratford. Shakespeare may or may not have been born in the room shown; but his father can be proved to have bought the house in 1574, ten years after. It may therefore be justly inferred, in the absence of proof, that he lived anywhere else in the interval, that he lived here, and that his son was born here ten years before he made his purchase; and as people, except on singular emergencies, are generally born upstairs, Shakespeare may have given his first puling cry in the long, low room pointed out. But at his grave all doubt vanishes. You stand on the tombstone with the inscription he himself wrote while living; you read his pathetic entreaty and blessing on the reader who revered his remains, and curses on him who dared to touch; you see his bust put up by his daughter; you hear the very breezing of the trees he himself heard, and listen to the humming watery ripple of the river he must often have enjoyed. The most poetical imagination could not have conceived a burial-place more English, more Shakespearian. As I stood and looked up at the unaffected bust, which bears evidence in the exquisite smile when seen in profile of being authentic, and I thought I was standing where Shakespeare had often been, I was

deeply touched. The church alone, from the seclusion of situation, with the trees, the river, the tombs, was enough to make one poetical; but to add to this, that the remains of Shakespeare, prostrate and silent, were lying near me, in a grave he had himself selected, in a church where he had often prayed, and with an epitaph he had himself written while living, it was impossible to say where on the face of the earth could an Englishman be more affected, or feel deeper or more touching sensations. I would not have bartered my associations at this unaffected, sequestered tomb of Stratford for all the classical delights of the Troad, the Acropolis, of Marathon. The old clerk, seeing me abstracted, opened the door that led to the churchyard close to the river, and left me to myself. I walked out, and lounging down to the Avon looked back on the church. The sun was setting behind me, and a golden light and shadow glittered on the glazed gothic windows; and as the trees waved tenderly backwards and forwards, what dazzled your eyes one moment was obscured by the foliage the next, and a burnished splendour and embrowned shadow kept shifting lazily. I was so close that the steeple towered up against the sky like the mast of some mighty vessel you pass under at sea. I stood and drank in all that an enthusiastic human being could feel, all the most ardent and devoted lover of a great genius could have a sensation of, and all that river, tree, or sunset could excite in addition. I was quite lost; and returned to my inn disgusted at the thoughts of food and waiters, and would willingly, if my Creator had so pleased, have taken my flight to a purer being of "calm pleasures or majestic pains." When I got to bed I could not sleep. I tumbled about, fancied the pillow hard, the bed badly made, the sheets damp, and I sat up and punched the pillow as I have seen the chamber-maids do; but it was all to no purpose; and at

daybreak I got up in a heat of eagerness and restless fidget to get to Charlecote. I put the whole house in an uproar; got an early breakfast, and started off for the Lucys' place as fast as my legs would carry me. My walking is no joke, as you know, and this morning I would have defied Barclay. I met a sturdy gypsy, and after I had passed him remembered I might as well ask the way to Charlecote. "Right across the cornfield, sir, and it will bring you to the back-way." I darted into the pathway, and coming to a swinging gate, pushed it open, and in a moment was inside an ancient park. Trees—full, tall, gigantic, and umbrageous—announce the growth, indeed of centuries. As I strolled along I caught a glimpse of the old red-brick house, and going close to the river-side came at once to two enormous willows branching aslant the stream, such as Ophelia hung to. Every blade of grass, every daisy and cowslip, every hedge and peeping flower, every tuft of tawny earth, every rustling and enormous tree casting its cool gigantic shadow on the sunny park, while the sheep dotted about on the glittering green where the sun streaked in, announced where Shakespeare imbibed his early, deep, and native taste for landscape scenery and forest solitude. They spoke to me as if Shakespeare was whispering in my ear. They looked as if his name was stamped by nature on their flowers and leaves in glittering dewdrops of gorgeous colour.

I wondered I had seen no deer, when looking into the shades I saw a lineal descendant, may be, of the very buck Shakespeare shot, and was tried for shooting, lounging on his speckled haunches, and staring at me; and then up jumped a beautiful doe, which I had not seen, and sprang off as if her feet were feathered. The house was now full in sight, and crossing a narrow, old, fantastic, and broken bridge, I came by the back-way to the entrance of the

garden. Here sat a lady with a parroquet, and a gardener cutting the grass; so, fearing I had intruded, I turned back again to the private entrance and sent in my compliments that I was from London, and begged permission to see the house. Leave was granted directly. The housekeeper, a pleasant woman, said, "Here is the hall where Sir Thomas tried Shakespeare." This is evidently the way the family pride alludes to the fact, and I dare say servants and all think Shakespeare a dissolute fellow who "ought to have been transported." I am convinced the hall is nearly the same as when Shakespeare was tried in it.

I like Malone's exquisite *moral* feeling. He proves there was no park; but might not deer be enclosed? Deer-stealing was thought no more of in those days than apple-stealing in these; and if he did not steal deer, why should Shakespeare give the Lucy family under Shallow? And in the "Winter's Tale" say, "I would there were no age between ten and three and twenty, or that youth should sleep out the rest, for there is nothing in the between but . . . wronging the ancientry, stealing, fighting!" His words allude to the point sufficiently to make me suspect, and tradition renders it most probably. Admirers of a genius must have him a true beau ideal, like the Apollo; and like the Apollo, without a single natural detail to excite our sympathies.

As I returned home, I could not help feeling how short a road is when in pursuit of an object, and how long and tedious when the object is gained. It began to rain with vigor, so disdaining the beaten path I dashed over a hedge on a voyage of discovery. At one time I came close to the river stretching along like a mirror, reflecting earth and sky, and at another plumped upon a nest of cottages, embosomed in trees, with rosy, scrambling, dirty children, squatting on broken steps. I pushed on through flood and

mud, and long wet grass and beaten-down barley, and at last got close to Stratford Bridge. At a humble cottage was the sign of "The Plough and Harrow," and "capital ale," posted up. So, wet and muddy, I walked in and found a pure specimen of a country alehouse. It was quite a house of Shakespeare's time, everything neat and characteristic. Smoking on a back bench was a country-looking farmer's man. I dried myself at the fire, and ordered some ale, and a pint for my smoking companion. "Well," said I, "did you ever hear of Shakespeare?" "Heer of un, ah!" (puff! came out a volley of smoke), "'ee warn't borrn in Henley Street tho'a!" "Where then?" said I. "By the waather," said he. "Who told you that?" I asked. "Why, Jahn Cooper." "Jahn Cooper," shrieked the landlady, "why, what dus 'ee knaw about it?" "Nonsense," said the barmaid sharply. My pot companion gave a furious smoke at thus being floored at the beginning of his attempt to put forth a new theory for my benefit, looked at me very gravely, and prepared to overwhelm me at once. He puffed away, and after taking a sip he said "Ah, zur! there's another wonderful feller!" "Who?" said I. "Why," said he, "Jahn Cooper, I tell 'ee." Restraining myself with a strong effort, I said, "And what has he done?" "Dun," said he, sitting back and smacking his knee, "dun!" in a voice of thunder, and laying down his pipe, and looking right into my eyes under his old weather-beaten, embrowned hat, he leaned forward, "I'll tell 'ee; 'ee's lived 'ere in this yeer town for ninety yeer as man and boy, and 'ee's never had the toothache, and neever last wan!" I saw the exquisite beauty of this in an instant. He then took up his pipe, letting the smoke ooze from the sides of his mouth, instead of puffing it out horizontally, till it ascended in curls of conscious victory to the ceiling of the apartment, while he leaned back his

head and crossed his legs with the air of a superior intelligence as if this conversation must now conclude. We were no longer on a level.

The Emigrant Ship

William Makepeace Thackeray to Mrs. Brookfield

1850(?).

I could not come yesterday evening to ring at the door; for I did not return until 8 o'clock from the visit to the emigrant ship at Gravesend, and then I had to work until 12, and polish off Pendennis. There are always four or five hours work when it is over, and four or five more would do it all the good in the world, and a second, or third reading.

The emigrant business was very solemn and affecting; it was with difficulty I could keep my spectacles dry—amongst the people taking leave, the families of grave-looking parents and unconscious children, and the bustle and incidents of departure. The cabins in one of the ships had only just been fitted up, and no sooner done than a child was that instant born in one of them, on the very edge of the old world, as it were, which it leaves for quite a new country, home, empire. You shake hands with one or two of these people, and pat the yellow heads of the children (there was a Newcastle woman with eight of them, who interested me a good deal), and say "God bless you, shake hands, you and I shall never meet again in this world, go and do your work across the four months of ocean, and God prosper it." The ship drops down the river, it gives us three great cheers as we come away in the steamer with heavy hearts rather. In three hours more Mr. W. M. T. is hard at work at Punch office; Mr.

Parson Quikette has got to his night school at St. George's in the East; that beautiful, gracious princess of a Mrs. Herbert is dressing herself up in diamonds and rubies very likely, to go out into the world, or is she upstairs in the nursery, reading a good book over the child's cradle. Oh! enormous, various, changing, wonderful, solemn world. Admirable providence of God that creates such an infinitude of men, it makes one very grave, and full of love and awe. I was thinking about this yesterday morning before six, when I was writing the last paragraph of Pendennis in bed, and the sun walked into the room and supplied the last paragraph with an allusion about you, and which I think means a benediction upon William, and your child, and my dear lady. God keep you.

On the Banks of the Thames with Boz

Charles Dickens to Mrs. Watson

Broadstairs, Kent, *July* 11, 1851.

My Dear Mrs. Watson,—I am so desperately indignant with you for writing me that short apology for a note, and pretending to suppose that under any circumstances I could fail to read with interest anything *you* wrote to me, that I have more than half a mind to inflict a regular letter upon you. If I were not the gentlest of men I should do it.

Poor dear Haldimand, I have thought of him so often. That kind of decay is so inexpressibly affecting and piteous to me, that I have no words to express my compassion and sorrow. When I was at Abbotsford, I saw in a vile glass case the last clothes Scott wore. Among them an old white hat, which seemed to be tumbled and bent and broken by the uneasy, purposeless wandering, hither and thither, of his heavy head. It so embodied Lockhart's pathetic

description of him when he tried to write, and laid down his pen and cried, that it associated itself in my mind with broken powers and mental weakness from that hour. I fancy Haldimand in such another, going listlessly about that beautiful place, and remembering the happy hours we have passed with him, and his goodness and truth, I think what a dream we live in, until it seems for the moment the saddest dream that ever was dreamed. Pray tell us if you hear more of him. We really loved him.

To go to the opposite side of life, let me tell you that a week or so ago I took Charley and three of his schoolfellows down the river gipsying. I secured the services of Charley's godfather (an old friend of mine, and a noble fellow with boys), and went down to Slough, accompanied by two immense hampers from Fortnum and Mason, on (I believe) the wettest morning ever seen out of the tropics.

It cleared before we got to Slough; but the boys, who had got up at four (we being due at eleven), had horrible misgivings that we might not come, in consequence of which we saw them looking into the carriages before us, all face. They seemed to have no bodies whatever, but to be all face; their countenances lengthened to that surprising extent. When they saw us the faces shut up as if they were upon strong springs, and their waistcoats developed themselves in the usual places. When the first hamper came out of the luggage-van, I was conscious of their dancing behind the guard; when the second came out with bottles in it, they all stood wildly on one leg. We then got a couple of flies to drive to the boat-house. I put them in the first, but they couldn't sit still a moment, and were perpetually flying up and down like the toy figures in the sham snuff-boxes. In this order we went on to "Tom Brown's, the tailor's," where they all dressed in aquatic

costume, and then to the boat-house, where they all cried in shrill chorus for "Mahogany"—a gentleman so called by reason of his sunburnt complexion, a waterman by profession. (He was likewise called during the day "Hog" and "Hogany," and seemed to be unconscious of any proper name whatsoever.) We embarked, the sun shining now, in a galley with a striped awning, which I had ordered for the purpose, and all rowing hard, went down the river. We dined in a field; what I suffered for fear those boys should get drunk, the struggles I underwent in a contest of feeling between hospitality and prudence, must ever remain untold. I feel, even now, old with the anxiety of that tremendous hour. They were very good, however. The speech of one became thick, and his eyes too like lobsters' to be comfortable, but only temporarily. He recovered and I suppose outlived the salad he took. I have heard nothing to the contrary, and I imagine I should have been implicated on the inquest if there had been one. We had tea and rashers of bacon at a public-house, and came home, the last five or six miles in a prodigious thunder-storm. This was the great success of the day, which they certainly enjoyed more than anything else. The dinner had been great, and Mahogany had informed them, after a bottle of light champagne, that he never would come up the river "with ginger company" any more. But the getting so completely wet through was the culminating part of the entertainment. You never in your life saw such objects as they were; and their perfect unconsciousness that it was at all advisable to go home and change, or that there was anything to prevent their standing at the station two mortal hours to see me off, was wonderful. As to getting them to their dames with any sort of sense that they were damp, I abandoned the idea. I thought it a success when they went down the street as civilly as if they were just up

and newly dressed, though they really looked as if you could have rubbed them to rags with a touch, like saturated curl-paper. . . .

I find I am "used up" by the Exhibition. I don't say "there is nothing in it"—there's too much. I have only been twice; so many things bewildered me. I have a natural horror of sights, and the fusion of so many sights in one has not decreased it.

I am not sure that I have seen anything but the fountain and perhaps the Amazon. It is a dreadful thing to be obliged to be false, but when anyone says, "Have you seen ——?" I say "Yes," because if I don't, I know he'll explain it, and I can't bear that. —— took all the school one day. The school was composed of a hundred "infants," who got among the horses' legs in crossing to the main entrance from the Kensington Gate, and came reeling out from between the wheels of coaches undisturbed in mind. They were clinging to horses, I am told, all over the park. When they were collected and added up by the frantic monitors, they were all right. They were then regaled with cake, etc., and went tottering and staring all over the place; the greater part wetting their forefingers and drawing a wavy pattern on every accessible object. One infant strayed. He was not missed. Ninety and nine were taken home, supposed to be the whole collection, but this particular infant went to Hammersmith. He was found by the police at night, going round and round the turnpike, which he still supposed to be a part of the Exhibition. He had the same opinion of the police, also of Hammersmith workhouse, where he passed the night. When his mother came for him in the morning, he asked when it would be over? It was a great Exhibition, he said, but he thought it long.

As I begin to have a foreboding that you will think the

same of this act of vengeance of mine, this present letter, I shall make an end of it with my heartiest and most loving remembrances to Watson. I would have liked him of all things to have been in the Eton expedition, tell him, and to have heard a song (by-the-bye, I have forgotten that) sung in the thunder-storm, solos by Charley, chorus by the friends, describing the career of a booby who was plucked at College, every verse ending—

> "I don't care a fig what the people may think,
> But what WILL the governor say!"

which was shouted with a deferential jollity towards myself, as a governor who had that day done a creditable action, and proved himself worthy of all confidence.—Ever, dear Mrs. Watson, most sincerely yours.

His Last Letter to His Mother Before Her Death

Thomas Carlyle to His Mother

Chelsea, *December* 4, 1853.

Dear old mother, weak and sick and dear to me, while I live in God's creation, what a day has this been in my solitary thought; for, except a few words to Jane, I have not spoken to any one, nor, indeed, hardly seen any one, it being dusk and dark before I went out—a dim, silent Sabbath day, the sky foggy, dark with damp, and a universal stillness the consequence, and it is this day gone fifty-eight years that I was born. And my poor mother! Well! we are all in God's hands. Surely God is good. Surely we ought to trust in Him, or what is there for the sons of men? Oh, my dear mother! Let it ever be a comfort to you, however weak you are, that you did your part honourably and well while in strength, and were a noble mother to me and to us all. I am now myself grown old, and have had

various things to do and suffer for so many years; but there is nothing I ever had to be so much thankful for as for the mother I had. That is a truth which I know well, and perhaps this day again it may be some comfort to you. Yes, surely, for if there has been any good in the things I have uttered in the world's hearing, it was your voice essentially that was speaking through me; essentially what you and my brave father meant and taught me to mean, this was the purport of all I spoke and wrote. And if in the few years that may remain to me, I am to get any more written for the world, the essence of it, so far as it is worthy and good, will still be yours. May God reward you, dearest mother, for all you have done for me! I never can. Ah no! but will think of it with gratitude and pious love so long as I have the power of thinking. And I will pray God's blessing on you, now and always, and will write no more on that at present, for it is better for me to be silent.

Reading Tacitus and Listening to the Nightingale

Edward FitzGerald to Mr. Allen

April 28, 1839.

My dear Allen,—Some one from this house is going to London: and I will try and write you some lines now in half an hour before dinner: I am going out for the evening to my old lady who teaches me the names of the stars, and other chaste information. You see, Master John Allen, that if I do not come to London (and I have no thought of going yet) and you will not write, there is likely to be an end of our communication: not by the way that I am never to go to London again: but not just yet. Here I live with tolerable content: perhaps with as much as most people arrive at, and what if one were properly grateful one would perhaps call perfect happiness. Here is a glorious sunshiny day:

all the morning I read about Nero in Tacitus lying at full length on a bench in the garden; a nightingale singing, and some red anemones eyeing the sun manfully not far off.

A funny mixture all this: Nero, and the delicacy of Spring: all very human however. Then at half-past one lunch on Cambridge cream cheese: then a ride over hill and dale: then spudding up some weeds from the grass: and then coming in, I sit down to write to you, my sister winding red worsted from the back of a chair, and the most delightful little girl in the world chattering incessantly. So runs the world away. You think I live in Epicurean ease; but this happens to be a jolly day: one isn't always well, or tolerably good, the weather is not always clear, nor nightingales singing, nor Tacitus full of pleasant atrocity. But such as life is, I believe I have got hold of a good end of it. . . .

Give my love to Thackeray from your upper window across the street. So he has lost a little child: and moreover has been sorry to do so. Well, good-bye, my dear John Allen; Auld Lang Syne. My kind regards to your lady.

> "Down to the vale this water steers,
> How merrily it goes:
> 'Twill murmur on a thousand years,
> And flow as now it flows."

Geldstone Hall, Beccles. E. F. G.

"If the Year were an Orchestra, To-day would be the Flute-tone in It"

Sidney Lanier to Paul Hamilton Hayne

Macon, Ga., *April* 13, 1870.

My dear Mr. Hayne:

Watching, night and day, for two weeks past, by the bedside of a sick friend, I have had no spiritual energy to

escape out of certain gloomy ideas which always possess me when I am in the immediate presence of physical ailment; and I did not care to write you that sort of letter which one is apt to send under such circumstances, since I gather from your letters that you have enough and to spare of these dismal down-weighings of the flesh's ponderous cancer upon suffering and thoughtful souls.

I am glad, therefore, that I waited until this divine day. If the year were an Orchestra, to-day would be the Flute-tone in it. A serene Hope, just on the verge of realising itself: a tender loneliness,—what some German calls *Waldeinsamkeit,* wood-loneliness,—the ineffable withdrawal-feeling that comes over one when he hides himself in among the trees, and knows himself shut in by their purity, as by a fragile yet impregnable wall, from the suspicions and the trade-regulations of men; and an inward thrill, in the air, or in the sunshine, one knows not which, half like the thrill of the passion of love, and half like the thrill of the passion of friendship:—these, which make up the office of the flute-voice in those poems which the old masters wrote for the Orchestra, also prevail throughout to-day.

Do you like—as I do—on such a day to go out into the sunlight and *stop thinking,*—lie fallow, like a field, and absorb those certain liberal *potentialities* which will in after days reappear, duly formulated, duly grown, duly perfected, as poems? I have a curiosity to know if to you, as to me, there come such as this day:—a day exquisitely satisfying with all the fulnesses of the Spring, and filling you as full of nameless tremors as a girl on a wedding-morn; and yet, withal, a day which utterly denies you the gift of speech, which puts its finger on the lip of your inspiration, which inexorably enforces upon your soul a silence that you infinitely long to break, a day, in short, which takes absolute

possession of you, and says to you, in tones which command obedience, *to-day you must forego expression and all outcome, you must remain a fallow field, for the sun and wind to fertilise, nor shall any corn or flowers sprout into visible green and red until to-morrow,*—mandates, further, that you have learned after a little experience not only not to fight against, but to love and revere as the wise communication of the Unseen Powers.

Have you seen Browning's "The Ring and the Book"? I am confident that, at the birth of this man, among all the good fairies who showered him with magnificent endowments, one bad one—as in the old tale—crept in by stealth and gave him a constitutional twist o' the neck, whereby his windpipe became, and has ever since remained, a marvellous tortuous passage. Out of this glottis-labyrinth his words won't and can't come straight. A hitch and a sharp crook in every sentence bring you up with a shock. But what a shock it is! Did you ever see a picture of a lasso, in the act of being flung? In a thousand coils and turns, inextricably crooked and involved and whirled, yet, if you mark the noose at the end, you see that it is directly in front of the bison's head, there, and is bound to catch him! This is the way Robert Browning catches you. The first sixty or seventy pages of "The Ring and the Book" are altogether the most doleful reading, in point either of idea or of music, in the English language; and yet the monologue of Giuseppe Caponsacchi, that of Pompilia Comparini, and the two of Guido Franceschini, are unapproachable, in their kind, by any living or dead poet, *me judice.* You get lightning-glimpses—and, as one naturally expects from lightning, zig-zag glimpses—into the intense night of the passion of these souls. It is entirely wonderful and without precedent. The fitful play of Guido's lust, and scorn, and hate, and cowardice, closes with a master-stroke:

"... Christ! Maria! God! ...
Pompilia, will you let them murder me?"

Pompilia, mark you, is dead, by Guido's own hand; deliberately stabbed, because he hated her purity, which all along he has reviled and mocked with the Devil's own malignant ingenuity of sarcasm.

You spoke of a project you wished to tell me. Let me hear it. Your plans are always of interest to me. Can I help you? I've not put pen to paper, in the literary way, in a long time. How I thirst to do so, how I long to sing a thousand various songs that oppress me, unsung,—is inexpressible. Yet, the mere work that brings bread gives me no time. I know not, after all, if this is a sorrowful thing. Nobody likes my poems except two or three friends,—who are themselves poets, and can supply themselves!

Strictly upon Scriptural principle, I've written you (as you see) almost entirely about myself. This is doing unto you as I would you should do unto me. Go, and do likewise. Write me about yourself. Your friend,

SIDNEY LANIER.

IV

Secrets

An author is recommended to procure and read his own book.
John Gay (1685-1732)

The first of the Ossian controversy.
David Hume (1711-1776)

An opium-eater contemplates a mad-house.
S. T. Coleridge (1772-1834)

He avows his belief in a future state.
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S. T. Coleridge (1772-1834)

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John Keats (1795-1821)

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Playing the penitent and confessing herself to a priest.
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Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855)

He finds himself depressed by the overshadowing of Tennyson's mightier intellect.
Edward FitzGerald (1809-1883)

Alfred Lord Tennyson is taught that Raffaele is true by beholding a little child.
Edward FitzGerald (1809-1883)

He longs to become a pirate.
Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894)

He believes himself to be inspired.
Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894)

An Author is Recommended to Procure and Read His Own Book

Gay to Swift

November 17, 1726.

About ten days ago a book was published here of the Travels of one Gulliver, which hath been the conversation of the whole town ever since: the whole impression sold in a week; and nothing is more diverting than to hear the different opinions people give of it, though all agree in liking it extremely. It is generally said that you are the author; but I am told, the bookseller declares he knows not from what hand it came. From the highest to the lowest it is universally read, from the cabinet council to the nursery. The politicians to a man agree, that it is free from particular reflections, but that the satire on general societies of men is too severe. Not but we now and then meet with people of greater perspicuity, who are in search of particular applications in every leaf; and it is highly probable we shall have keys published to give light into Gulliver's design. Lord Bolingbroke is the person who least approves it, blaming it as a design of evil consequence to depreciate human nature, at which it cannot be wondered that he takes most offence, being himself the most accomplished of his species, and so losing more than any other of that praise which is due both to the dignity and virtue of a man. Your friend, my Lord Harcourt, commends it very much, though he thinks in some places the matter too far carried. The

Duchess Dowager of Marlborough is in raptures at it; she says she can dream of nothing else since she read it; she declares that she hath now found out, that her whole life hath been lost in caressing the worst part of mankind, and treating the best as her foes; and that if she knew Gulliver, though he had been the worst enemy she ever had, she would give up her present acquaintance for his friendship. You may see by this, that you are not much injured by being supposed the author of this piece. If you are, you have disobliged us, and two or three of your best friends, in not giving us the least hint of it while you were with us; and in particular Dr. Arbuthnot, who says it is ten thousand pities he had not known it, he could have added such abundance of things upon every subject. Among Lady-critics, some have found out that Mr. Gulliver had a particular malice to Maids of Honour. Those of them who frequent the church, say, his design is impious, and that it is depreciating the works of the Creator. Notwithstanding, I am told the Princess hath read it with great pleasure. As to other critics, they think the flying island is the least entertaining; and so great an opinion the town have of the impossibility of Gulliver's writing at all below himself, it is agreed that part was not writ by the same hand, though this hath its defenders too. It hath passed Lords and Commons, *nemine contradicente;* and the whole town, men, women, and children, are quite full of it.

Perhaps I may all this time be talking to you of a book you have never seen, and which hath not yet reached Ireland; if it hath not, I believe what we have said will be sufficient to recommend it to your reading, and that you will order me to send it to you.

But it will be much better to come over yourself, and read it here, where you will have the pleasure of variety of commentators, to explain the difficult passages to you.

The First of the Ossian Controversy

David Hume to ——

Edinburgh, *August* 16, 1760.

Sir,—

I am surprised to find by your letter, that Mr. Gray should have entertained suspicions with regard to the authenticity of these fragments of our Highland poetry. The first time I was shown the copies of some of them in manuscript, by our friend John Home, I was inclined to be a little incredulous on that head; but Mr. Home removed my scruples, by informing me of the manner in which he procured them from Mr. Macpherson, the translator. These two gentlemen were drinking the waters together at Moffat last autumn, when their conversation fell upon Highland poetry, which Mr. Macpherson extolled very highly. Our friend, who knew him to be a good scholar, and a man of taste, found his curiosity excited, and asked whether he had ever translated any of them. Mr. Macpherson replied, that he never had attempted any such thing, and doubted whether it was possible to transfuse such beauties into our language; but, for Mr. Home's satisfaction, and in order to give him a general notion of the strain of that wild poetry, he would endeavour to turn one of them into English. He accordingly brought him one next day, which our friend was so much pleased with, that he never ceased soliciting Mr. Macpherson, till he insensibly produced that small volume which has been published.

After this volume was in everybody's hands, and universally admired, we heard every day new reasons, which put the authenticity, not the great antiquity which the translator ascribes to them, beyond all question, for their antiquity is a point which must be ascertained by reasoning;

though the arguments he employs seem very probable and convincing. But certain it is, that these poems are in everybody's mouth in the Highlands, have been handed down from father to son, and are of an age beyond all memory and tradition.

In the family of every Highland chieftain, there was anciently retained a bard, whose office was the same with that of the Greek rhapsodists; and the general subject of the poems which they recited was the wars of Fingal; an epoch no less remarkable among them, than the wars of Troy among the Greek poets. This custom is not even yet altogether abolished: the bard and piper are esteemed the most honourable offices in a chieftain's family, and these two characters are frequently united in the same person. Adam Smith, the celebrated Professor in Glasgow, told me that the piper of the Argyleshire Militia repeated to him all those poems which Mr. Macpherson has translated, and many more of equal beauty. Major Mackay, Lord Reay's brother, also told me that he remembers them perfectly; as likewise did the Laird of Macfarlane, the greatest antiquarian whom we have in this country, and who insists so strongly on the historical truth, as well as on the poetical beauty of these productions. I could add the Laird and Lady Macleod to these authorities, with many more, if these were not sufficient, as they live in different parts of the Highlands, very remote from each other, and they could only be acquainted with poems that had become in a manner national works, and had gradually spread themselves into every mouth, and imprinted themselves on every memory. Every body in Edinburgh is so convinced of this truth, that we have endeavoured to put Mr. Macpherson on a way of procuring us more of these wild flowers. He is a modest, sensible young man, not settled in any living, but employed as a private tutor in Mr. Grahame of Belgowan's family, a

way of life which he is not fond of. We have, therefore, set about a subscription of a guinea or two guineas a-piece, in order to enable him to quit that family, and undertake a mission into the Highlands, where he hopes to recover more of these fragments.

There is, in particular, a country surgeon somewhere in Lochabar, who, he says, can recite a great number of them, but never committed them to writing; as indeed the orthography of the Highland language is not fixed, and the natives have always employed more the sword than the pen. This surgeon has by heart the Epic poem mentioned by Mr. Macpherson in his Preface; and as he is somewhat old, and is the only person living that has it entire, we are in the more haste to recover a monument, which will certainly be regarded as a curiosity in the republic of letters.

I own that my first and chief objection to the authenticity of these fragments was not on account of the noble and even tender strokes which they contain; for these are the offspring of genius and passion in all countries; I was only surprised at the regular plan which appears in some of these pieces, and which seems to be the work of a more cultivated age. None of the specimens of barbarous poetry known to us, the Hebrew, Arabian, or any other, contain this species of beauty; and if a regular epic poem, or even any thing of that kind, nearly regular, should also come from that rough climate or uncivilised people, it would appear to me a phenomenon altogether unaccountable.

I remember Mr. Macpherson told me, that the heroes of this Highland epic were not only, like Homer's heroes, their own butchers, bakers, and cooks, but also their own shoemakers, carpenters, and smiths. He mentioned an incident which put this matter in a remarkable light. A warrior had the head of his spear struck off in battle; upon which he immediately retires behind the army, where a large forge

was erected, makes a new one, hurries back to the action, pierces his enemy while the iron, which was yet red-hot, hisses in the wound. This imagery you will allow to be singular, and so well imagined that it would have been adopted by Homer had the manners of the Greeks allowed him to have employed it.

I forgot to mention, as another proof of the authenticity of these poems, and even of the reality of the adventures contained in them, that the names of the heroes, Fingal, Oscar, Osur, Oscan, Dermid, are still given in the Highlands to large mastiffs in the same manner as we affix to them the names of Cæsar, Pompey, Hector, or the French that of Marlborough. It gives me pleasure to find that a person of so fine a taste as Mr. Gray approves of these fragments; as it may convince us that our fondness of them is not altogether founded on national prepossessions, which, however, you know to be a little strong. The translation is elegant, but I made an objection to the author, which I wish you would communicate to Mr. Gray, that we may judge of the justness of it. There appeared to me many verses in his prose, and all of them in the same measure with Mr. Shenstone's famous ballad,—

> "Ye shepherds, so cheerful and gay,
> Whose flocks never carelessly roam, etc."

Pray, ask Mr. Gray whether he made the same remark, etc., and whether he thinks it a blemish.

An Opium-eater Contemplates a Mad-house

S. T. Coleridge to Joseph Cottle

April 26, 1814.

You have poured oil in the raw and festering wound of an old friend's conscience, Cottle! but it is *oil of vitriol!*

I but barely glanced at the middle of the first page of your letter, and have seen no more of it—not from resentment (God forbid!), but from the state of my bodily and mental sufferings that scarcely permitted human fortitude to let in a new visitor of affliction.

The object of my present reply is to state the case just as it is. First, that for ten years the anguish of my spirit has been indescribable, the sense of my danger staring, but the consciousness of my GUILT worse, far worse than all. I have prayed, with drops of agony on my brow, trembling not only before the justice of my Maker, but even before the mercy of my Redeemer. "I gave thee so many talents, what hast thou done with them?" Secondly, overwhelmed as I am with a sense of my direful infirmity, I have never attempted to disguise or conceal the cause. On the contrary, not only to friends have I stated the whole case with tears and the very bitterness of shame, but in two instances I have warned young men, mere acquaintances, who had spoken of having taken laudanum, of the direful consequences, by an awful exposition of the tremendous effects on myself.

Thirdly, though before God, I cannot lift up my eyelids, and only do not despair of His mercy, because to despair would be adding crime to crime, yet to my fellow-men I may say that I was seduced into the ACCURSED habit ignorantly. I had been almost bed-ridden for many months with swellings in my knees. In a medical journal, I unhappily met with an account of a cure performed in a similar case (or what appeared to me so, by rubbing in of laudanum, at the same time taking a given dose internally). It acted like a charm, like a miracle! I recovered the use of my limbs, of my appetite, of my spirits, and this continued for near a fortnight. At length the unusual stimulus subsided, the complaint returned, the supposed remedy was recurred to—but I cannot go through the dreary history.

Suffice it to say, that effects were produced which acted on me by terror and cowardice, of pain and sudden death, not (so help me God!) by any temptation of pleasure, or expectation, or desire of exciting pleasurable sensations. On the very contrary, Mrs. Morgan and her sister will bear witness, so far as to say, that the longer I abstained the higher my spirits were, the keener my enjoyment—till the moment, the direful moment, arrived when my pulse began to fluctuate, my heart to palpitate, and such a dreadful falling abroad, as it were, of my whole frame, such intolerable restlessness, and incipient bewilderment, that in the last of my several attempts to abandon the dire poison, I exclaimed in agony, which I now repeat in seriousness and solemnity, "I am too poor to hazard this." Had I but a few hundred pounds, but £200—half to send to Mrs. Coleridge, and half to place myself in a private mad-house, where I could procure nothing but what a physician thought proper, and where a medical attendant could be constantly with me for two or three months (in less than that time life or death would be determined), then there might be hope. Now there is none!! O God! how willingly would I place myself under Dr. Fox, in his establishment; for my case is a species of madness, only that it is a derangement, an utter impotence of the volition, and not of the intellectual faculties. You bid me rouse myself: go bid a man paralytic in both arms, to rub them briskly together, and that will cure him. "Alas!" he would reply, "that I cannot move my arms is my complaint and my misery."

May God bless you, and your affectionate, but most afflicted,

S. T. Coleridge.

He Avows His Belief in a Future State

Robert Southey to John Rickman

Keswick, *August* 17-20, 1809.

My dear Rickman,—

I can wish you nothing better than that your life may be as long, your age as hale, and your death as easy as your father's. The death of a parent is a more awful sorrow than that of a child, but a less painful one: it is in the inevitable order and right course of nature that ripe fruit should fall: it seems like one of its mishaps when the green bud is cut off. In the outward and visible system of things, nothing is wasted: it would therefore be belying the whole system to believe that intellect and love—which are of all things the best—could perish. I have a strong and lively faith in a state of continued consciousness from this stage of existence, and that we shall recover the consciousness of some lower stages through which we may previously have past, seems to me not improbable. The supposition serves for dreams and system—the belief is a possession more precious than any other. I love life, and can thoroughly enjoy it; but if to exist were but a life-hold property, I am doubtful whether I should think the lease worth holding. It would be better never to have been than ever to cease to be.

He Schemes to Save His Genius from Shipwreck

S. T. Coleridge to Thomas Allsop

January, 1821.

Yes, my conscience forces me to plead guilty. I have only by fits and starts even prayed. I have not prevailed on myself to pray to God in sincerity and entireness for the fortitude that might enable me to resign myself to the

abandonment of all my life's best hopes, to say boldly to myself:—1. "Gifted with powers confessedly above mediocrity, aided by an education, of which, no less from almost unexampled hardships and sufferings than from manifold and peculiar advantages, I have never yet found a parallel, I have devoted myself to a life of unintermitted reading, thinking, meditating, and observing. I have not only sacrificed all worldly prospects of wealth and advancement, but have in my inmost soul stood aloof from temporary reputation. In consequence of these toils, and this self-dedication, I possess a calm and clear consciousness, that in many and most important departments of truth and beauty, I have outstrode my contemporaries—those at least of highest name; that the number of my printed works bears witness that I have not been idle; and the seldom acknowledged, but strictly *provable,* effects of my labours appropriated to the immediate welfare of my age, in the *Morning Post,* before and during the peace of Amiens, in the *Courier* afterwards, and in the series and various subjects of my lectures at Bristol and at the Royal and Surrey Institutions, in Fetter-lane, at Willis's Rooms, and at the Crown and Anchor (add to which, the unlimited freedom of my communications in colloquial life), may surely be allowed as evidence that I have not been useless in my generation. But, from circumstances, the *main* portion of my harvest is still on the ground, ripe indeed, and only waiting, a few for the sickle, but a large part only for the *sheaving,* and carting, and housing; but from all this I must turn away, must let them rot as they lie, and be as though they never had been, for I must go and gather blackberries and earth-nuts, or pick mushrooms and gild oak-apples for the palates and fancies of chance customers. I must abrogate the name of philosopher and poet, and scribble as fast as I can, and with as little thought as I can, for *Blackwood's Magazine;*

or, as I have been employed for the last days, in writing MS. sermons for lazy clergymen, who stipulate "that the composition must not be more than respectable, for fear they should be desired to publish the visitation sermon!" This I have not yet had courage to do. My soul sickens, and my heart sinks; and thus, oscillating between both, I do neither, neither as it ought to be done, or to any profitable end. If I were to detail only the various, I might say capricious, interruptions that have prevented the finishing of this very scrawl, begun on the very day I received your last kind letter, you would need no other illustrations. Now I see but one possible plan of rescuing my permanent utility. It is briefly this, and plainly. For what we struggle with inwardly, we find at least easiest to *bolt out,* namely—that of engaging from the circle of those who think respectfully and hope highly of my powers and attainments, a yearly sum, for three or four years, adequate to my actual support, with such comforts and decencies of appearance as my health and habits have made necessaries, so that my mind may be unanxious as far as the present time is concerned; that thus I should stand both enabled and pledged to begin with some one work of these above mentioned, and for two-thirds of my whole time to devote myself to this exclusively till finished, to take the chance of its success by the best mode of publication that would involve me in no risk; then to proceed with the next, and so on till the works above mentioned as already in full material existence, should be reduced into formal and actual being; while in the remaining third of my time I might go on maturing and completing my great work (for if but easy in mind, I have no doubt either of the reawakening power or of the kindling inclination) and my *Christabel,* and what else the happier hour might inspire—and without inspiration a barrel-organ may be played right deftly; but

> "All otherwise the state of poet stands;
> For lordly want is such a tyrant fell,
> That where he rules all power he doth expel.
> The vaunted verse a vacant head demands,
> Ne wont with crabbed Care the muses dwell:
> Unwisely weaves who takes two webs in HAND."

Now, Mr. Green has offered to contribute from £30 to £40 yearly, for three or four years; my young friend and pupil, the son of one of my dearest old friends, £50; and I think that from £10 to £20 I could rely upon from another. The sum required would be about £200, to be repaid, of course, as far as the disposal and sale of my writings produce the means.

I have thus placed before you at large, wanderingly, as well as diffusely, the statement which I am inclined to send in a compressed form to a few of those of whose kind dispositions towards me I have received assurances—and to their interest and influence I must leave it—anxious, however, before I do this, to learn from you your very inmost feeling and judgment as to the previous questions. Am I entitled, have I earned a *right* to do this? Can I do it without moral degradation? and, lastly, can it be done without loss of character in the eyes of my acquaintance, and of my friends' acquaintance, who may have been informed of the circumstances? That, if attempted at all, it will be attempted in such a way, and that such persons only will be spoken to, as will not expose me to indelicate rebuffs, to be afterwards matters of gossip, I know those to whom I shall intrust the statement too well to be much alarmed about.

Pray, let me either see or hear from you as soon as possible; for, indeed, and indeed, it is no inconsiderable accession to the pleasure I anticipate from disembarrassment, that *you* would have to contemplate in a more gracious

form, and in a more ebullient play of the inward fountain, the mind and manners of

My dear friend,
Your obliged and very affectionate friend,
S. T. Coleridge.

Don Juan's Thoughts Grow Grim

Lord Byron to John Murray

Bologna, *August* 24, 1819.

Keep the *anonymous,* in any case: it helps what fun there may be. But if the matter grow serious about "Don Juan," and you feel *yourself* in a scrape, or *me* either, *own that I am the author.* I will never *shrink;* and if *you* do, I can always answer you in the question of Guatimozin to his minister—each being on his own coals.

I wish that I had been in better spirits; but I am out of sorts, out of nerves, and now and then (I begin to fear) out of my senses. All this Italy has done for me, and not England: I defy all you, and your climate to boot, to make me mad. But if ever I do really become a bedlamite, and wear a strait waistcoat, let me be brought back among you: your people will then be proper company.

I assure you what I here say and feel has nothing to do with England, either in a literary or personal point of view. All my present pleasures or plagues are as Italian as the opera. And, after all, they are but trifles; for all this arises from my "Dama's" being in the country for three days (at Capofiume). But as I could never live but for one human being at a time (and, I assure you, *that one* has never been *myself,* as you may know by the consequences, for the *selfish* are successful in life), I feel alone and unhappy.

I have sent for my daughter from Venice, and I ride daily, and walk in a garden, under a purple canopy of grapes, and sit by a fountain, and talk with the gardener of his tools, which seem greater than Adam's, and with his wife, and with his son's wife, who is the youngest of the party, and, I think, talks best of the three. Then I revisit the Campo Santo, and my old friend, the sexton, has two—but *one* the prettiest daughter imaginable; and I amuse myself with contrasting her beautiful and innocent face of fifteen with the skulls with which he has peopled several cells, and particularly with that of one skull, dated 1766, which was once covered (the tradition goes) by the most lovely features of Bologna—noble and rich. When I look at these, and at this girl—when I think of what *they were,* and what she must be—why, then, my dear Murray, I won't shock you by saying what I think. It is little matter what becomes of us "bearded men," but I don't like the notion of a beautiful woman's lasting less than a beautiful tree—than her own picture—her own shadow, which won't change so to the sun as her face to the mirror. I must leave off, for my head aches consumedly. I have never been quite well since the night of the representation of Alfieri's *Mirra* a fortnight ago.

Yours ever.

A Reformer, Aged Nineteen, Talks Concerning His Past

P. B. Shelley to William Godwin

Keswick, *January* 10, 1812.

Sir,—

It is not otherwise to be supposed than that I should appreciate your avocations far beyond the pleasure or benefit

which can accrue to me from their sacrifice. The time, however, will be small which may be mis-spent in reading this letter; and much individual pleasure as an answer might give me, I have not the vanity to imagine that it will be greater than the happiness elsewhere diffused during the time which its creation will occupy.

You complain that the generalizing character of my letter renders it deficient in interest; that I am not an individual to you. Yet, intimate as I am with your character and your writings, intimacy with *yourself* must in some degree precede this exposure of my peculiarities. It is scarcely possible, however pure be the morality which he has endeavoured to diffuse, but that generalization must characterize the uninvited address of a stranger to a stranger.

I proceed to remedy the fault. I am the son of a man of fortune in Sussex. The habits of thinking of my father and myself never coincided. Passive obedience was inculcated and enforced in my childhood. I was required to love, because it was *my duty* to love: it is scarcely necessary to remark, that coercion obviated its own intention. I was haunted with a passion for the wildest and most extravagant romances. Ancient books of Chemistry and Magic were perused with an enthusiasm of wonder, almost amounting to belief. My sentiments were unrestrained by anything within me; external impediments were numerous and strongly applied; their effect was merely temporary.

From a reader, I became a writer of romances; before the age of seventeen I had published two, *St. Irvyn* and *Zastrozzi,* each of which, though quite uncharacteristic of me as now I am, yet serves to mark the state of my mind at the period of their composition. I shall desire them to be sent to you; do not, however, consider this as any obligation to yourself to misapply your valuable time.

It is now a period of more than two years since first I saw your inestimable book of *Political Justice;* it opened to my mind fresh and more extensive views; it materially influenced my character, and I rose from its perusal a wiser and a better man. I was no longer the votary of romance; till then I had existed in an ideal world—now I found that in this universe of ours was enough to excite the interest of the heart, enough to employ the discussions of reason; I beheld, in short, that I had duties to perform. Conceive the effect which the *Political Justice* would have upon a mind before jealous of its independence, participating somewhat singularly in a peculiar susceptibility.

My age is now *nineteen;* at the period to which I allude I was at Eton. No sooner had I formed the principles which I now profess, than I was anxious to disseminate their benefits. This was done without the slightest caution. I was twice expelled, but recalled by the interference of my father. I went to Oxford. Oxonian society was insipid to me, uncongenial with my habits of thinking. I could not descend to common life: the sublime interest of poetry, lofty and exalted achievements, the proselytism of the world, the equalization of its inhabitants, were to me the soul of my soul. You can probably form some idea of the contrast exhibited to my character by those with whom I was surrounded. Classical reading and poetical writing employed me during my residence at Oxford.

In the meantime I became, in the popular sense of the word, a sceptic. I printed a pamphlet, avowing my opinion, and its occasion. I distributed this anonymously to men of thought and learning, wishing that Reason should decide on the case at issue: it was never my intention to deny it. Mr. ——, at Oxford, among others, had the pamphlet; he showed it to the Master and the Fellows of University College, and *I* was sent for. I was informed, that in case

I denied the publication, no more would be said. I refused, and was expelled.

It will be necessary, in order to elucidate this part of my history to inform you, that I am heir by entail to an estate of £6,000 per annum. My principles have induced me to regard the law of primogeniture as an evil of primary magnitude. My father's notions of family honour are incoincident with my knowledge of public good. I will never sacrifice the latter to any consideration. My father has ever regarded me as a blot, a defilement of his honour. He wished to induce me by poverty to accept of some commission in a distant regiment, and in the interim of my absence to prosecute the pamphlet, that a process of outlawry might make the estate, on his death, devolve to my younger brother. These are the leading points of the history of the man before you. Others exist, but I have thought proper to make some selection, not that it is my design to conceal or extenuate any part, but that I should by their enumeration quite outstep the bounds of modesty. Now, it is for you to judge whether, by permitting me to cultivate your friendship, you are exhibiting yourself more really useful than by the pursuance of those avocations, of which the time spent in allowing this cultivation would deprive you. I am now earnestly pursuing studious habits. I am writing "An inquiry into the causes of the failure of the French Revolution to benefit mankind." My plan is that of resolving to lose no opportunity to disseminate truth and happiness.

I am married to a woman whose views are similar to my own. To you, as the regulator and former of my mind, I must ever look with real respect and veneration.

Yours sincerely,
P. B. Shelley.

He Hopes for the Support of a Higher Power

John Keats to Benjamin Robert Haydon

Margate, *Saturday Eve* [10 *May*, 1817].
[*Postmark*, 13 *May*, 1817.]

My dear Haydon,

> Let Fame, that all pant after in their lives,
> Live register'd upon our brazen tombs,
> And so grace us in the disgrace of death:
> When spite of cormorant devouring time
> The endeavour of this present breath may buy
> That Honor which shall bate his Scythe's keen edge
> And make us heirs of all eternity.

To think that I have no right to couple myself with you in this speech would be death to me, so I have e'en written it, and I pray God that our "brazen tombs" be nigh neighbours. It cannot be long first; the "endeavour of this present breath" will soon be over, and yet it is as well to breathe freely during our sojourn—it is as well as if you have not been teazed with that Money affair, that bill-pestilence. However, I must think that difficulties nerve the Spirit of a Man—they make our Prime Objects a Refuge as well as a Passion. The Trumpet of Fame is as a tower of Strength, the ambitious bloweth it and is safe. I suppose, by your telling me not to give way to forebodings, George has mentioned to you what I have lately said in my Letters to him—truth is I have been in such a state of Mind as to read over my Lines and hate them. I am one that "gathers Samphire, dreadful trade"—the Cliff of Poesy towers above me—yet when Tom who meets with some of Pope's Homer in Plutarch's Lives reads some of those to me they seem like Mice to mine. I read and write about eight hours a day. There is an old saying "well begun is

half done"—'tis a bad one. I would use instead, "Not begun at all till half done;" so according to that I have not begun my poem and consequently (à priori) can say nothing about it. Thank God! I do begin arduously where I leave off, notwithstanding occasional depressions; and I hope for the support of a High Power while I climb this little eminence, and especially in my Years of more momentous Labour. I remember your saying that you had notions of a good Genius presiding over you. I have of late had the same thought, for things which [I] do half at Random are afterwards confirmed by my judgment in a dozen features of Propriety. Is it too daring to fancy Shakespeare this Presider? When in the Isle of Wight I met with a Shakespeare in the Passage of the House at which I lodged—it comes nearer to my idea of him than any I have seen—I was but there a Week, yet the old woman made me take it with me though I went off in a hurry. Do you not think this is ominous of good? I am glad you say every man of great views is at times tormented as I am.

His Attitude Towards Women

John Keats to Benjamin Bailey

Inverary, *July* 18 [1818].

I am certain I have not a right feeling towards women—at this moment I am striving to be just to them, but I cannot. Is it because they fall so far beneath my boyish Imagination? When I was a schoolboy I thought a fair woman a pure Goddess; my mind was a soft nest in which some one of them slept, though she knew it not. I have no right to expect more than their reality—I thought them ethereal above men—I find them perhaps equal—great by comparison is very small. Insult may be inflicted in more

ways than by word or action. One who is tender of being insulted does not like to think an insult against another. I do not like to think insults in a lady's company—I commit a crime with her which absence would not have known. Is it not extraordinary?—when among men, I have no evil thoughts, no malice, no spleen—I feel free to speak or to be silent—I can listen, and from every one I can learn—my hands are in my pockets, I am free from all suspicion and comfortable. When I am among women, I have evil thoughts, malice, spleen—I cannot speak, or be silent—I am full of suspicions, and therefore listen to nothing—I am in a hurry to be gone. You must be charitable and put all this perversity to my being disappointed since my boyhood. Yet with such feelings I am happier alone among crowds of men, by myself, or with a friend or two. With all this, trust me, I have not the least idea that men of different feelings and inclinations are more short-sighted than myself. I never rejoiced more than at my Brother's marriage, and shall do so at that of any of my friends. I must absolutely get over this—but how? the only way is to find the root of the evil, and so cure it "with backward mutters of dissevering power"—that is a difficult thing; for an obstinate Prejudice can seldom be produced but from a gordian complication of feelings, which must take time to unravel, and care to keep unravelled. I could say a good deal about this, but I will leave it, in hopes of better and more worthy dispositions—and also content that I am wronging no one, for after all I do think better of womankind than to suppose they care whether Mister John Keats, five feet high, likes them or not.

His Struggle with and Release from Opium

Thomas De Quincey to a Friend

1844.

With respect to my book (*The Logic of Political Economy*), which perhaps by this time you and Professor Nichol will have received through the publishers, I have a word to say. Upon some of the distinctions there contended for it would be false humility if I should doubt they are sound. The substance, I am too well assured, is liable to no dispute. But as to the method of presenting the distinctions, as to the composition of the book, and the whole evolution of a course of thinking, there it is that I too deeply recognise the mind, affected by my morbid condition. Through that ruin, and by help of that ruin, I look into and read the latter states of Coleridge. His chaos I comprehended by the darkness of my own, and both were the work of laudanum. It is as if ivory carvings and elaborate fretwork and fair enamelling should be found with worms and ashes amongst coffins and the wrecks of some forgotten life or some abolished nature. In parts and fractions eternal creations are carried on, but the nexus is wanting, and life and the central principle which should bind together all the parts at the centre, with all its radiations to the circumference, are wanting. Infinite incoherence, ropes of sands, gloomy incapacity of vital pervasion by some one plastic principle, that is the hideous incubus upon my mind already. For there is no disorganised wreck so absolute, so perfect, as that which is wrought by misery.

Misery is a strong word; and I would not have molested your happiness by any such gloomy reference, were it not that I did really, and in solemn earnest, regard my condition in that same hopeless light as I did until lately. I had one sole glimmer of hope, and it was this—that laudanum

might be the secret key to all this wretchedness, not utterable to any human ear, which for ever I endured. Upon this subject the following is my brief record. On leaving Glasgow in the first week of June, 1843, I was as for two years you had known me. Why I know not, but for some cause during the summer months the weight of insufferable misery and mere abhorrence of life increased; but also it fluctuated. A conviction fell upon me that immense exercise might restore me. But you will imagine my horror when, with that conviction, I found, precisely in my earliest efforts, my feet gave way, and the misery in all its strength came back. Every prospect I had of being laid up as a cripple for life. Much and deeply I pondered on this, and I gathered myself up as if for a final effort. For if that fate were established, farewell I felt for me to all hope of restoration. Eternally the words sounded in my ears: "Suffered and was buried." Unless that one effort which I planned and determined, as often you see a prostrate horse "biding his time" and reserving his strength for one mighty struggle, too surely I believed that for me no ray of light would ever shine again. The danger was, that at first going off on exercise the inflammation should come on; that, if then I persisted, the inflammation would settle into the bones, and the case become desperate. It matters not to trouble you with the details—the result was this:—I took every precaution known to the surgical skill of the neighbourhood. Within a measured space of forty-four yards in circuit, so that forty rounds were exactly required for one mile, I had within ninety days walked a thousand miles. And so far I triumphed. But because still I was irregular as to laudanum, this also I reformed. For six months no results; one dreary uniformity of report—absolute desolation; misery so perfect that too surely I perceived, and no longer disguised from myself the impossibility of continu-

ing to live under so profound a blight. I now kept my journal as one who in a desert island is come to his last day's provisions. On Friday, February 23, I might say for the first time, in scriptural words "And the man was sitting clothed and in his right mind." That is not too strong an expression. I had known all along, and too ominously interpreted the experience from the fact, that I was not in my perfect mind. Lunacy causes misery; the border is sometimes crossed, and too often that is the order of succession. But also misery, and above all physical misery, working by means of intellectual remembrances and persecution of thoughts, no doubt sometimes inversely causes lunacy. To that issue I felt that all things tended. You may guess, therefore, the awe that fell upon me, when, not by random accident, capable of no theory on review, but in consequence of one firm system pursued through eight months as to one element, and nearly three as to another, I recovered in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, such a rectification of the compass as I had not known for years. It is true that this frame departed from me within forty-eight hours; but that no way alarmed me—I drew hope from the omen. It is as if a man had been in a whirlpool, carried violently by a headlong current, and before he could speak or think, he was riding as if at anchor, once more dull and untroubled, as in days of infancy. The current caught me again; and the old sufferings in degree came back, as I have said. There is something shocking and generally childish, by too obvious associations, in any suggestion of suicide; but too certainly I felt that to this my condition tended; for again enormous irritability was rapidly travelling over the disk of my life, and this and the consciousness of increasing weakness, added to my desolation of heart. I felt that no man could continue to struggle. Coleridge had often spoken to me of the dying away from him of all hope,

not meaning, as I rightly understood him, the hope that forms itself as a distant look out into the future, but of the gladsome vital feelings that are born of the blood, and make the goings-on of life pleasurable.

Then I partly understood him, now perfectly; and laying all things together, I returned obstinately to the belief that laudanum was at the root of all this unimaginable hell. Why then not, if only by way of experiment, leave it off? Alas! that had become impossible. Then I descended to a hundred drops. Effects so dreadful and utterly unconjectured by medical men succeeded that I was glad to get back under shelter. Not the less I persisted; silently, surely, descended the ladder, and as I have said, suddenly found my mind as if whirled round on its true centre. A line of Wordsworth's about Germany I remembered:—

"All power was given her in the dreadful trance."

Such was my sense; illimitable seemed the powers restored to me; and now, having tried the key, and found it the true key, even though a blast of wind has blown the door to again, no jot of spirits was gone away from me; I shall arise as one risen from the dead.

This long story I have told you, because nothing short of this could explain my conduct, past, present, and future. And thus far there is an interest for all the world—that I am certain of this, viz., that misery is the talisman by which man communicates with the world outside of our fleshly world.

Playing the Penitent and Confessing Herself to a Priest

Charlotte Brontë to Miss Emily J. Brontë [1]

Bruxelles, *September 2nd,* 1843.

I should inevitably fall into the gulf of low spirits if I stayed always by myself here without a human being to speak to, so I go out and traverse the Boulevards and streets of Bruxelles sometimes for hours together. Yesterday I went on a pilgrimage to the cemetery, and far beyond it on to a hill where there was nothing but fields as far as the horizon. When I came back it was evening; but I had such a repugnance to return to the house, which contained nothing that I cared for, I still kept threading the streets in the neighbourhood of the Rue d'Isabelle and avoiding it. I found myself opposite to Ste. Gudule, and the bell, whose voice you know, began to toll for evening salut. I went in, quite alone (which procedure you will say is not much like me), wandered about the aisles where a few old women were saying their prayers, till vespers begun. I stayed till they were over. Still I could not leave the church or force myself to go home—to school I mean. An odd whim came into my head. In a solitary part of the Cathedral six or seven people still remained kneeling by the confessionals. In two confessionals I saw a priest. I felt as if I did not care what I did, provided it was not absolutely wrong, and that it served to vary my life and yield a moment's interest. I took a fancy to change myself into a Catholic and go and make a real confession to see what it was like. Knowing me as you do, you will think

[1] This incident finds a setting in *Villette,* wherein the daughter of a staunch Protestant makes her confession to a priest of the Roman Church—surely a striking example of the Truth which lies buried in so-called Fiction.

this odd, but when people are by themselves they have singular fancies. A penitent was occupied in confessing. They do not go into the sort of pew or cloister which the priest occupies, but kneel down on the steps and confess through a grating. Both the confessor and the penitent whisper very low, you can hardly hear their voices. After I had watched two or three penitents go and return I approached at last and knelt down in a niche which was just vacated. I had to kneel there ten minutes waiting, for on the other side was another penitent invisible to me. At last that went away and a little wooden door inside the grating opened, and I saw the priest leaning his ear towards me. I was obliged to begin, and yet I did not know a word of the formula with which they always commence their confessions. It was a funny position. I felt precisely as I did when alone on the Thames at midnight. I commenced with saying I was a foreigner and had been brought up a Protestant. The priest asked if I was a Protestant then. I somehow could not tell a lie and said "yes." He replied that in that case I could not *"jouir du bonheur de la confesse";* but I was determined to confess, and at last he said he would allow me because it might be the first step towards returning to the true church. I actually did confess —a real confession. When I had done he told me his address, and said that every morning I was to go to the rue du Parc—to his house—and he would reason with me and try to convince me of the error and enormity of being a Protestant!!! I promised faithfully to go. Of course, however, the adventure stops there, and I hope I shall never see the priest again. I think you had better not tell papa of this. He will not understand that it was only a freak, and will perhaps think I am going to turn Catholic. Trusting that you and papa are well, and also Tabby and the Holyes, and hoping you will write to me immediately,—I am, yours,

C. B.

Her Home-coming

Charlotte Brontë to W. S. Williams

June 25th, 1849.

My dear Sir,—I am now again at home, where I returned last Thursday. I call it *home* still—much as London would be called London if an earthquake should shake its streets to ruins. But let me not be ungrateful: Haworth parsonage is still a home for me, and not quite a ruined or desolate home either. Papa is there, and two most affectionate and faithful servants, and two old dogs, in their way as faithful and affectionate—Emily's[1] large house-dog which lay at the side of her dying bed, and followed her funeral to the vault, lying in the pew couched at our feet while the burial service was being read—and Anne's little spaniel. The ecstasy of these poor animals when I came in was something singular. At former returns from brief absences they always welcomed me warmly—but not in that strange, heart-touching way. I am certain they thought that, as I was returned, my sisters were not far behind. But here my sisters will come no more. Keeper may visit Emily's little bed-room—as he still does day by day—and Flossy may look wistfully round for Anne, they will never see them again—nor shall I—at least the human part of me. I must not write so sadly, but how can I help thinking and feeling sadly? In the daytime effort and occupation aid me, but when evening darkens, something in my heart revolts against the burden of solitude—the sense of loss and want grows almost too much for me. I am not good or amiable in such moments, I am rebellious, and it is only

[1] Of the four children who had formed the Brontë household, three were now dead—Charlotte alone remained. Branwell had died September 24, 1848; Emily, December 19, 1848; and Anne, May 28, 1849.

the thought of my dear father in the next room, or of the kind servants in the kitchen, or some caress from the poor dogs, which restore me to softer sentiments and more rational views. As to the night—could I do without bed, I would never seek it. Waking, I think, sleeping, I dream of them; and I cannot recall them as they were in health, still they appear to me in sickness and suffering. Still, my nights were worse after the first shock of Branwell's death —they were terrible then; and the impressions experienced on waking were at that time such as we do not put into language. Worse seemed at hand than was yet endured—in truth, worse awaited us.

All this bitterness must be tasted. Perhaps the palate will grow used to the draught in time, and find its flavour less acrid. This pain must be undergone; its poignancy, I trust, will be blunted one day.

. . . . . .

Labour must be the cure, not sympathy. Labour is the only radical cure for rooted sorrow.

He Finds Himself Depressed by the Overshadowing of Tennyson's Mightier Intellect

Edward FitzGerald to John Allen

Manchester, *May* 23, 1835.

Dear Allen,

I think that the fatal two months have elapsed by which a letter shall become due to me from you. Ask Mrs. Allen if this is not so. Mind, I don't speak this upbraidingly, because I know that you didn't know where I was. I will tell you all about this by degrees. In the first place, I staid at Mirehouse till the beginning of May, and then, going homeward, spent a week at Ambleside, which perhaps you don't know, is on the shores of Winandermere. It was very

pleasant there: though it was to be wished that the weather had been a little better. I have scarce done anything since I saw you but abuse the weather: but these four days have made amends for all: and are, I hope, the beginning of Summer at last. Alfred Tennyson staid with me at Ambleside: Spedding was forced to go home, till the last two days of my stay there. I will say no more of Tennyson than the more I have seen of him, the more cause I have to think him great. His little humours, and grumpinesses were so droll, that I was always laughing: and was often put in mind (strange to say) of my little unknown friend, Undine —I must, however, say, further, that I felt what Charles Lamb describes, a sense of depression at times from the overshadowing of a so much more lofty intellect than my own: this (though it may seem vain to say so) I never experienced before, though I have often been with much greater intellects: but I could not be mistaken in the universality of his mind; and perhaps I have received some benefit in the now more distinct consciousness of my dwarfishness. I think that you should keep all this to yourself, my dear Allen: I mean, that it is only to you that I would write so freely about myself. You know most of my secrets, and I am not afraid of entrusting even my vanities to so true a man.

Alfred Lord Tennyson is Taught that Raffaele is True by Beholding a Little Child

Edward FitzGerald to W. F. Pollock

Lowestoft, *Sept.* 22, 1875.

My dear Pollock,

You will scarce thank me for a letter in pencil: perhaps you would thank me less if I used the steel pen, which is my other resource. You could very well dispense with a

Letter altogether: and yet I believe it is pleasant to get one when abroad.

I daresay I may have told you what Tennyson said of the Sistine Child, which he then knew only by Engraving. He first thought the Expression of his Face (as also the Attitude) almost too solemn, even for the Christ within. But some time after, when A. T. married, and had a Son, he told me that Raffaele was all right: that no Man's face was so solemn as a Child's, full of wonder. He said one morning that he watched his Babe "worshipping the Sunbeam on the Bedpost and Curtain." I risk telling you this again for the sake of the Holy Ground you are now standing on.

Which reminds me also of a remark of Béranger's not out of place. He says God forgot to give Raffaele to Greece, and made a "joli cadeau" of him to the Church of Rome.

He Longs to Become a Pirate

Robert Louis Stevenson to Cosmo Monkhouse

La Solitude, Hyères-les-Palmiers, Var,

March 16, 1884.

My dear Monkhouse,—You see with what promptitude I plunge into correspondence; but the truth is, I am condemned to a complete inaction, stagnate dismally, and love a letter. Yours, which would have been welcome at any time, was thus doubly precious.

Dover sounds somewhat shiveringly in my ears. You should see the weather *I* have—cloudless, clear as crystal, with just a punkah-draft of the most aromatic air, all pine and gum tree. You would be ashamed of Dover; you would scruple to refer, sir, to a spot so paltry. To be idle at Dover is a strange pretension; pray, how do you warm yourself?

If I were there I should grind knives or write blank verse, or —— But at least you do not bathe? It is idle to deny it: I have—I may say I nourish—a growing jealousy of the robust, large-legged, healthy Britain-dwellers, patient of grog, scorners of the timid umbrella, innocuously breathing fog: all which I once was, and I am ashamed to say liked it. How ignorant is youth! grossly rolling among unselected pleasures; and how nobler, purer, sweeter, and lighter, to sip the choice tonic, to recline in the luxurious invalid chair, and to tread, well-shawled, the little round of the constitutional. Seriously, do you like to repose? Ye gods, I hate it. I never rest with any acceptation; I do not know what people mean who say they like sleep and that damned bedtime which, since long ere I was breeched, has rung a knell to all my day's doings and beings. And when a man, seemingly sane, tells me he has "fallen in love with stagnation," I can only say to him, "You will never be a Pirate!" This may not cause any regret to Mrs. Monkhouse; but in your own soul it will clang hollow—think of it! Never! After all boyhood's aspirations and youth's immoral day-dreams, you are condemned to sit down, grossly draw in your chair to the fat board, and be a beastly Burgess till you die. Can it be? Is there not some escape, some furlough from the Moral Law, some holiday jaunt contrivable into a Better Land? Shall we never shed blood? This prospect is too grey:

> "Here lies a man who never did
> Anything but what he was bid;
> Who lived his life in paltry ease,
> And died of commonplace disease."

To confess plainly, I had intended to spend my life (or any leisure I might have from Piracy upon the high seas) as the leader of a great horde of irregular cavalry, devas-

tating whole valleys. I can still, looking back, see myself in many favourite attitudes; signalling for a boat from my pirate ship with a pocket-handkerchief, I at the jetty end, and one or two of my bold blades keeping the crowd at bay; or else turning in the saddle to look back at my whole command (some five thousand strong) following me at the hand-gallop up the road out of the burning valley: this last by moonlight.

He Believes Himself to be Inspired

Robert Louis Stevenson to W. Craibe Angus

Vailima, Samoa, *April,* 1891.

'T is a far cry to Lochow from tropical Vailima.

> "But still our hearts are true, our hearts are Highland,
> And we in dreams behold the Hebrides."

When your hand is in, will you remember our poor Edinburgh Robin? Burns alone has been just to his promise; follow Burns, he knew best, he knew whence he drew fire—from the poor, white-faced, drunken, vicious boy that raved himself to death in the Edinburgh madhouse. Surely there is more to be gleaned about Fergusson, and surely it is high time the task was set about. I may tell you (because your poet is not dead) something of how I feel: we are three Robins who have touched the Scots lyre this last century. Well, the one is the world's, he did it, he came off, he is for ever; but I and the other—! what bonds we have—born in the same city; both sickly; both pestered, one nearly to madness, one to the madhouse, with a damnatory creed; both seeing the stars and the dawn, and wearing shoe-leather on the same ancient stones, under the same pends, down the same closes, where our common ancestors clashed in their armour, rusty or bright. And the old Robin,

who was before Burns and the flood, died in his acute, painful youth, and left the models of the great things that were to come; and the new, who came after, outlived his green-sickness, and has faintly tried to parody the finished work. If you will collect the strays of Robin Fergusson, fish for material, collect any last re-echoing of gossip, command me to do what you prefer—to write the preface—to write the whole if you prefer: anything, so that another monument (after Burns's) be set up to my unhappy predecessor on the causey of Auld Reekie. You will never know, nor will any man, how deep this feeling is: I believe Fergusson lives in me.[1] I do, but tell it not in Gath; every man has

[1] Keats, in like manner, believed that Shakespeare lived again in him. Stevenson makes three distinct references in his correspondence to this "fanciful superstition": In the first, written in 1891, after wistfully saying how strange it is that his letter will be read in the grey metropolis of Edinburgh, while he, its author, is an exile in Upolu, he requests his friend to go on "the first grey, east-windy day into the Caledonian Station, if it looks at all as it did of yore; I met Satan there. And then go and stand by the cross, and remember the other one—him that went down—my brother, Robert Fergusson." The second occurs in the extract which is printed above. The third was penned in the May of 1894, in the December of which year he died. He is writing to Charles Baxter, an old friend of his boyhood. The Edinburgh Edition is in process of publishing; this final triumph of his literary career recalls to him the shadows of his first beginnings. He inquires of Baxter whether he remembers "one night when I communicated to you certain intimations of early death and aspirations after fame? I was particularly maudlin; and my remorse the next morning on a review of my folly has written the matter very deeply in my mind; from yours it may easily have fled. If any one at that moment could have shown me the Edinburgh Edition, I suppose I should have died." He goes on to state that he now has something heavy on his mind; that he has always had a great sense of kinship with poor Fergusson—"so clever a boy, so wild, of such a mixed strain, so unfortunate, born in the same town with me, and, as I always

these fanciful superstitions, coming, going, but yet enduring; only most men are so wise (or the poet in them so dead) that they keep their follies for themselves.—I am, yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

felt, rather by express intimation than from evidence, so like myself." The injustice wherewith the one Robert has been rewarded and the other left out in the cold sits heavy upon him. He wishes that he could contrive a way in which he can do honour to his unfortunate namesake. He is half-minded to dedicate the whole edition to his memory, but fears, as did Keats when he dedicated Endymion to Chatterton, that it will look like affectation; also he thinks that his wife is entitled to receive the dedication of his life's work. "At the same time," he adds, "it is very odd—it really looks like the transmigration of souls—I feel that I must do something for Fergusson; Burns has been before me with the gravestone. It occurs to me you might take a walk down the Canongate and see in what condition the stone is. If it be at all uncared for, we might repair it, and perhaps add a few words of inscription." He suggests a suitable inscription, and so the matter ends. Within seven months Fergusson's spiritual kinsman was also dead.

V

Crises

How the citizen of the world met a crisis.
Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774)

How the tragedy occurred.
Charles Lamb (1775-1835)

The comforter.
S. T. Coleridge (1772-1834)

His courage.
Charles Lamb (1775-1835)

Written twelve days before his death.
S. T. Coleridge (1772-1834)

The death of Shelley.
Leigh Hunt (1784-1859)

His last letter and his last pun.
Thomas Hood (1798-1845)

His purpose in the war.
Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865)

God lifts a sleeping child.
Robert Browning (1812-1888)

Farewell.
John Sterling (1806-1844)

The death of Emily Brontë.
Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855)

A man of genius, poet, painter, learns at last that his life has failed.
James Smetham (1821-1889)

How the Citizen of the World Met a Crisis

Oliver Goldsmith to his Mother

My dear Mother,—

If you will sit down and calmly listen to what I say, you shall be fully resolved in every one of those many questions you have asked me. I went to Cork, and converted my horse, which you prize so much higher than Fiddle-back, into cash, took my passage in a ship bound for America, and, at the same time, paid the captain for my freight and all the other expenses of my voyage. But it so happened that the wind did not answer for three weeks; and you know, mother, that I could not command the elements. My misfortune was, that, when the wind served, I happened to be with a party in the country, and my friend the captain never inquired after me, but set sail with as much indifference as if I had been on board. The remainder of my time I employed in the city and its environs, viewing everything curious, and you know no one can starve while he has money in his pocket.

Reduced, however, to my last two guineas, I began to think of my dear mother and friends whom I had left behind me, and so bought that generous beast Fiddle-back, and bade adieu to Cork with only five shillings in my pocket. This, to be sure, was but a scanty allowance for man and horse towards a journey of above a hundred miles; but I did not despair, for I knew I must find friends on the road.

I recollected particularly an old and faithful acquaint-

ance I made at college, who had often and earnestly pressed me to spend a summer with him, and he lived but eight miles from Cork. This circumstance of vicinity he would expatiate on to me with peculiar emphasis. "We shall," says he, "enjoy the delights of both city and country, and you shall command my stable and my purse."

However, upon the way, I met a poor woman all in tears, who told me her husband had been arrested for a debt he was not able to pay, and that his eight children must now starve, bereaved as they were of his industry, which had been their only support. I thought myself at home, being not far from my good friend's house, and therefore parted with a moiety of all my store; and pray, mother, ought I not have given her the other half-crown, for what she got would be of little use to her? However, I soon arrived at the mansion of my affectionate friend, guarded by the vigilance of a huge mastiff, who flew at me, and would have torn me to pieces but for the assistance of a woman, whose countenance was not less grim than that of the dog; yet she with great humanity relieved me from the jaws of this Cerberus, and was prevailed on to carry up my name to her master.

Without suffering me to wait long, my old friend, who was then recovering from a severe fit of sickness, came down in his nightcap, nightgown, and slippers, and embraced me with the most cordial welcome, showed me in, and, after giving me a history of his indisposition, assured me that he considered himself peculiarly fortunate in having under his roof the man he most loved on earth, and whose stay with him must, above all things, contribute to his perfect recovery. I now repented sorely I had not given the poor woman the other half-crown, as I thought all my bills of humanity would be punctually answered by this worthy man. I revealed to him my whole soul; I opened to him

all my distresses; and freely owned that I had but one half-crown in my pocket; but that now, like a ship after weathering out the storm, I considered myself secure in a safe and hospitable harbour. He made no answer, but walked about the room, rubbing his hands as one in deep study. This I imputed to the sympathetic feelings of a tender heart, which increased my esteem for him, and as that increased, I gave the most favourable interpretation to his silence. I construed it into delicacy of sentiment, as if he dreaded to wound my pride by expressing his commiseration in words, leaving his generous conduct to speak for itself.

It now approached six o'clock in the evening; and as I had eaten no breakfast, and as my spirits were raised, my appetite for dinner grew uncommonly keen. At length the old woman came into the room with two plates, one spoon, and a dirty cloth, which she laid upon the table. This appearance, without increasing my spirits, did not diminish my appetite. My protectress soon returned with a small bowl of sago, a small porringer of sour milk, a loaf of stale brown bread, and the heel of an old cheese all over crawling with mites. My friend apologised that his illness obliged him to live on slops, and that better fare was not in the house; observing, at the same time, that a milk diet was certainly the most healthful; and at eight o'clock he again recommended a regular life, declaring that for his part he would *lie down with the lamb and rise with the lark.* My hunger was at this time so exceedingly sharp that I wished for another slice of the loaf, but was obliged to go to bed without even that refreshment.

This lenten entertainment I had received made me resolve to depart as soon as possible; accordingly, next morning, when I spoke of going, he did not oppose my resolution; he rather commended my design, adding some very sage counsel upon the occasion. "To be sure," said

he, "the longer you stay away from your mother the more you will grieve her and your other friends; and possibly they are already afflicted at hearing of this foolish expedition you have made." Notwithstanding all this, and without any hope of softening such a sordid heart, I again renewed the tale of my distress, and asking "how he thought I could travel above a hundred miles upon one half-crown?" I begged to borrow a single guinea which I assured him should be repaid with thanks. "And you know, sir," said I; "it is no more than I have done for you." To which he firmly answered, "Why, look you, Mr. Goldsmith, that is neither here nor there, I have paid you all you ever lent me, and this sickness of mine has left me bare of cash. But I have bethought myself of a conveyance for you; sell your horse, and I will furnish you a much better one to ride on." I readily grasped at his proposal, and begged to see the nag; on which he led me to his bed chamber, and from under the bed he pulled out a stout oak stick. "Here he is," said he; "take this in your hand, and it will carry you to your mother's with more safety than such a horse as you ride." I was in doubt, when I got it into my hand, whether I should not in the first place apply it to his pate; but a rap at the street door made the wretch fly to it, and when I returned to the parlour, he introduced me, as if nothing of the kind had happened, to the gentleman who entered, as Mr. Goldsmith, his most ingenious and worthy friend, of whom he had so often heard him speak with rapture. I could scarcely compose myself; and must have betrayed indignation in my mien to the stranger, who was a counsellor-at-law in the neighbourhood, a man of engaging aspect and polite address.

After spending an hour, he asked my friend and me to dine with him at his house. This I declined at first, as I wished to have no further communication with my hos-

pitable friend; but at the solicitation of both I at last consented, determined as I was by two motives; one, that I was prejudiced in favour of the looks and manner of the counsellor; and the other, that I stood in need of a comfortable dinner. And there, indeed, I found everything that I could wish, abundance without profusion, and elegance without affectation. In the evening, when my old friend, who had eaten very plentifully at his neighbour's table, but talked again of lying down with the lamb, made a motion to me for retiring, our generous host requested I should take a bed with him, upon which I plainly told my old friend that he might go home and take care of the horse he had given me, but that I should never re-enter his doors. He went away with a laugh, leaving me to add this to the other little things the counsellor already knew of his plausible neighbour.

And now, my dear mother, I found sufficient to reconcile me to all my follies; for here I spent three whole days. The counsellor had two sweet girls to his daughters, who played enchantingly on the harpsichord; and yet it was but a melancholy pleasure I felt the first time I heard them: for that being the first time also that either of them had touched the instrument since their mother's death, I saw the tears in silence trickle down their father's cheeks. I every day endeavoured to go away, but every day was pressed and obliged to stay. On my going, the counsellor offered me his purse, with a horse and servant to convey me home; but the latter I declined, and only took a guinea to bear my necessary expenses on the road.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

To Mrs. Anne Goldsmith, Ballymahon.

I

How the Tragedy Occurred

Charles Lamb to Samuel Taylor Coleridge

September, 1796.

My dearest Friend,—

White, or some of my friends, or the public papers, by this time may have informed you of the terrible calamities that have fallen on our family. I will only give you the outlines; my poor dear, dearest, sister, in a fit of insanity, has been the death of her own mother. I was at hand only time enough to snatch the knife out of her grasp. She is at present in a madhouse, from whence I hear she must be moved to a hospital. God has preserved to me my senses; I eat, and drink, and sleep, I have my judgment, I believe, very sound. My poor father was slightly wounded, and I am left to take care of him and my aunt. Mr. Norris of the Blue-Coat School has been very kind to us, and we have no other friends; but, thank God, I am very calm and composed, and able to do the best that remains to do. Write as religious a letter as possible, but no mention of what is gone and done with. With me "the former things are passed away," and I have something more to do than to feel.

God Almighty have us all in His keeping.

C. Lamb.

Mention nothing of poetry, I have destroyed every vestige of past vanities of that kind. Do as you please, but if you publish, publish mine (I give free leave) without name or initial, and never send me a book, I charge you.

Your own judgment will convince you not to take any notice of this yet to your dear wife. You look after your

family; I have my reason and strength left to take care of mine. I charge you, don't think of coming to see me. Write. I will not see you if you come. God Almighty love you and all of us.

C. LAMB.

II

THE COMFORTER

S. T. Coleridge to Charles Lamb

September 28, 1796.

Your letter, my friend, struck me with a mighty horror. It rushed upon me and stupefied my feelings. You bid me write you a religious letter. I am not a man who would attempt to insult the greatness of your anguish by any other consolation. Heaven knows that in the easiest fortunes there is much dissatisfaction and weariness of spirit; much that calls for the exercise of patience and resignation; but in storms like these, that shake the dwelling and make the heart tremble, there is no middle way between despair and the yielding up of the whole spirit unto the guidance of faith. And surely it is a matter of joy that your faith in Jesus has been preserved; the Comforter that should relieve you is not far from you. But as you are a Christian, in the name of that Saviour, who was filled with bitterness and made drunken with wormwood, I conjure you to have recourse in frequent prayer to "His God and your God"; the God of mercies, and Father of all comfort. Your poor father is, I hope, almost senseless of the calamity; the unconscious instrument of Divine Providence knows it not, and your mother is in heaven. It is sweet to be roused from a frightful dream by the song of birds and the gladsome rays of the morning. Ah, how infinitely more sweet to be awakened from the blackness and amazement of a

sudden horror by the glories of God manifest and the hallelujahs of angels.

As to what regards yourself, I approve altogether of your abandoning what you justly call vanities. I look upon you as a man called by sorrow and anguish and a strange dissolution of hopes into quietness, and a soul set apart and made peculiar to God. We cannot arrive at any portion of heavenly bliss without in some measure imitating Christ; and they arrive at the largest inheritance who imitate the most difficult parts of His character, and, bowed down and crushed under foot, cry in fulness of faith, "Father, Thy will be done."

I wish above measure to have you for a little while here; no visitants shall blow on the nakedness of your feelings; you shall be quiet, and your spirit may be healed. I see no possible objection, unless your father's helplessness prevent you, and unless you are necessary to him. If this be not the case, I charge you write me that you will come.

I charge you, my dearest friend, not to dare to encourage gloom or despair. You are a temporary sharer in human miseries that you may be an eternal partaker of the Divine nature. I charge you, if by any means it be possible, come to me.

I remain your affectionate
S. T. Coleridge.

III

His Courage

Charles Lamb to S. T. Coleridge

October 3, 1796.

My Dearest Friend,

Your letter was an inestimable treasure to me. It will be a comfort to you, I know, to know that our prospects are

somewhat brighter. My poor dear, dearest, sister, the unhappy and unconscious instrument of the Almighty's judgments on our house, is restored to her senses; to a dreadful sense and recollection of what has past, awful to her mind and impressive (as it must be to the end of life), but tempered with religious resignation and the reasonings of a sound judgment, which, in this early stage, knows how to distinguish between a deed committed in a transient fit of frenzy, and the terrible guilt of a mother's murder. I have seen her. I found her, this morning, calm and serene; far, very far from an indecent forgetful serenity; she has a most affectionate and tender concern for what has happened. Indeed, from the beginning, frightful and hopeless as her disorder seemed, I had confidence enough in her strength of mind, and religious principle, to look forward to a time when even she might recover tranquility. God be praised, Coleridge, wonderful as it is to tell, I have never once been otherwise than collected and calm,[1] even on the dreadful day, and in the midst of the terrible scene, I preserved a tranquility which bystanders may have construed into indifference—a tranquility not of despair. Is it folly or sin in me to say that it was a religious principle that most supported me? I allow much to other favourable circumstances. I felt that I had something else to do than to regret. On the first evening, my aunt was lying insensible, to all appearance like one dying—my father, with his poor forehead plastered over, from a wound he had received from a daughter loved by him, and who loved him no less dearly —my mother a dead and murdered corpse in the next room —yet was I wonderfully supported. I closed not my eyes in sleep that night, but lay without terror and despair. I have lost no sleep since. I had been long used not to rest

[1] Six weeks of the year 1795 Charles Lamb had himself spent in a madhouse at Hoxton.

in things of sense—had endeavoured after a comprehension of mind, unsatisfied with the ignorant present time, and *this* kept me up. I had the whole weight of the family thrown on me; for my brother, little disposed (I speak not without tenderness for him) at any time to take care of old age and infirmities, had now, with his bad leg, an exemption from such duties, and I was now left alone. One little incident may serve to make you understand my way of managing my mind. Within a day or two after the fatal one, we dressed for dinner a tongue which we had had salted for some weeks in the house. As I sat down, a feeling like remorse struck me; this tongue poor Mary got for me, and I can partake of it now, when she is far away! A thought occurred and relieved me—if I give into this way of feeling, there is not a chair, a room, an object in our rooms, that will not awaken the keenest griefs; I must rise above such weaknesses. I hope this was not want of true feeling. I did not let this carry me, though, too far. On the second day (I date from the day of horrors), as is usual in such cases, there were a matter of twenty people, I do think, supping in our room; they prevailed with me to eat with them (for to eat I never refused). They were all making merry in the room. Some had come from friendship, some from busy curiosity, and some from interest; I was going to partake with them; when my recollection came that my poor dead mother was lying in the next room—the very next room—a mother who, through life, wished nothing but her children's welfare. Indignation, the rage of grief, something like remorse, rushed upon my mind. In an agony of emotion I found my way mechanically to the adjoining room, and fell on my knees by the side of her coffin, asking forgiveness of heaven, and sometimes of her, for forgetting her so soon. Tranquility returned, and it was the only violent emotion that mastered me, and I think it did me good.

I mention these things because I hate concealment, and love to give a faithful journal of what passes within me. Our friends have been very good. Sam Le Grice, who was then in town, was with me the three or four first days, and was a brother to me, gave up every hour of his time, to the very hurting of his health and spirits, in constant attendance and humouring my poor father; talked with him, read to him, played at cribbage with him (for so short is the old man's recollection that he was playing at cards, as though nothing had happened, while the coroner's inquest was sitting over the way). Samuel wept tenderly when he went away, for his mother wrote him a very severe letter on his loitering so long in town, and he was forced to go. A gentleman, brother to my godmother, from whom we never had right or reason to expect any such assistance, sent my father twenty pounds; and to crown all these God's blessings to our family at such a time, an old lady, a cousin of my father and aunt's, a gentlewoman of fortune, is to take my aunt and make her comfortable for the short remainder of her days. My aunt is recovered, and as well as ever, and highly pleased at thoughts of going—and has generously given up the interest of her little money (which was formerly paid my father for her board) wholely and solely to my sister's use. Reckoning this, we have, Daddy and I, for our two selves and an old maid-servant to look after him when I am out, which will be necessary, £170 or £180 rather a-year, out of which we can spare £50 or £60 at least for Mary while she stays at Islington, where she must and shall stay during her father's life, for his and her comfort. I know John will make speeches about it, but she shall not go into a hospital. The good lady of the madhouse, and her daughter, an elegant, sweet-behaved, young lady, love her, and are taken with her amazingly; and I know from her own mouth she loves them, and longs to be with them as

much. Poor thing, they say she was but the other morning saying, she knew she must go to Bethlem for life; that one of her brothers would have it so, but the other would wish it not, but be obliged to go with the stream; that she had often as she passed Bethlem thought it likely, "here it may be my fate to end my days," conscious of a certain flightiness in her poor head oftentimes and mindful of more than one severe illness of that nature before. A legacy of £100, which my father will have at Christmas, and this £20 I mentioned before, with what is in the house, will much more than set us clear. If my father, an old servant-maid, and I, can't live, and live comfortably on £130 or £120 a-year, we ought to burn by slow fires; and I almost would that Mary might not go into an hospital. Let me not leave an unfavourable impression on your mind respecting my brother. Since this has happened, he has been very kind and brotherly; but I fear for his mind—he has taken his ease in the world and is not fit himself to struggle with difficulties, nor has much accustomed himself to throw himself into their way; and I know his language already, "Charles, you must take care of yourself, you must not abridge yourself of a single pleasure you have been used to," etc., etc., in that style of talking. But you, a necessarian, can respect a difference of mind, and love what is *amiable* in a character not perfect. He has been very good —but I fear for his mind. Thank God, I can unconnect myself with him, and shall manage all my father's monies in future myself, if I take charge of Daddy, which poor John has not even hinted a wish, at any future time even, to share with me. The lady at the madhouse assures me that I may dismiss immediately both doctor and apothecary, retaining occasionally a composing draught or so for a while; and there is a less expensive establishment in her house, where she will only not have a room and nurse to

herself; for £50 or guineas a-year—the outside would be £60—you know, by economy, how much more even I shall be able to spare for her comforts. She will, I fancy, if she stays, make one of the family, rather than of the patients, and the old and young ladies I like exceedingly, and she loves dearly; and they, as the saying is, take to her very extraordinarily, if it is extraordinary that people who see my sister should love her. Of all the people I ever saw in the world, my poor sister was most and thoroughly devoid of the last tincture of selfishness. I will enlarge upon her qualities poor dear, dearest soul, in a future letter, for my own comfort, for I understand her thoroughly; and, if I mistake not, in the most trying situation that a human being can be found in, she will be found (I speak with not sufficient humility, I fear, but humanly and foolishly speaking), she will be found, I trust, uniformly great and amiable. God keep her in her present mind, to whom be thanks and praise for all His dispensations to mankind!

C. Lamb.

Written Twelve Days before His Death

S. T. Coleridge to Adam Steinmetz Kennard

Grove, Highgate, *July* 13, 1834.

My dear Godchild,—

I offer up the same fervent prayer for you now as I did kneeling before the altar when you were baptized into Christ, and solemnly received as a living member of His spiritual body, the church. Years must pass before you will be able to read with an understanding heart what I now write. But I trust that the all-gracious God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, who by His only-begotten Son (all mercies in one sovereign mercy!) has redeemed you from evil ground, and willed you

to be born out of darkness, but into light; out of death, but into life; out of sin, but into righteousness; even into "the Lord our righteousness"—I trust that He will graciously hear the prayers of your dear parents, and be with you as the spirit of health and growth, in body and in mind. My dear godchild, you received from Christ's minister at the baptismal font, as your Christian name, the name of a most dear friend of your father's, and who was to me even as a son—the late Adam Steinmetz, whose fervent aspirations and paramount aim, even from early youth, was to be a Christian in thought, word, and deed; in will, mind, and affections. I, too, your godfather, have known what the enjoyment and advantages of this life are, and what the more refined pleasures which learning and intellectual power can give; I now, on the eve of my departure, declare to you, and earnestly pray that you may hereafter live and act on the conviction, that health is a great blessing; competence, obtained by honourable industry, a great blessing; and a great blessing it is, to have kind, faithful, and loving friends and relatives; but that the greatest of all blessings, as it is the most ennobling of all privileges, is to be indeed a Christian. But I have been likewise through a large portion of my later life, a sufferer, sorely affected with bodily pains, languor, and manifold infirmities; and for the last three or four years have, with few and brief intervals, been confined to a sick-room, and at this moment, in great weakness and heaviness, write from a sick-bed, hopeless of recovery, yet without prospect of a speedy removal. And I thus, on the brink of the grave solemnly bear witness to you, that the Almighty Redeemer, most gracious in His promises to them that truly seek Him, is faithful to perform what He has promised; and has reserved, under all pains and infirmities, the peace that passeth all understanding, with the supporting assurance of a reconciled God, who will not

withdraw His spirit from me in the conflict, and in His own time will deliver me from the evil one. Oh, my dear godchild! eminently blessed are they who begin *early* to seek, fear, and love their God, trusting wholly in the righteousness and mediation of their Lord, Redeemer, Saviour, and everlasting High Priest, Jesus Christ. Oh, preserve this as a legacy and bequest from your unseen godfather and friend.

S. T. Coleridge.

The Death of Shelley

Leigh Hunt to Elizabeth Kent (his sister-in-law)

Pisa, *July* 20, 1822.

Dearest Bessy,—

Your sister is as well as she can be expected to be: so am I, and the children; all which I tell you at once, at the head of my letter, lest the frightful note I am compelled to strike up, should affect you still more than it must. Good God, how shall I say it? My beloved friend Shelley,—my dear, my divine friend, the best of friends and men, he is no more. I know not how to proceed for anguish; but you need not be under any alarm for me. Thank Heaven! the sorrows I have gone through enable me to bear this; and we all endeavour to bear it as well as possible for each other's sakes, which is what he, the noble-minded being, would have wished. Would to God I could see him—his spirit—sitting this moment by the table. I think it would no more frighten me than the sight of my baby,—whom I kiss and wonder why he has not gone with him.

He was returning to Lerici by sea with his friend Captain Williams, who is said also to have been a most amiable man, and appeared so. It was on the 8th. A storm arose; and it is supposed the boat must have foundered not far from

home. The bodies were thrown up some days after. Dear S. had retained a book in his pocket, which he told me he would not part with till he saw me again,—Keats's last publication. He borrowed it to read as he went. It will be buried with him: that is to say, it is so already, on the sea shore; but if he is taken up to be buried elsewhere, it shall go with him. Mr. Williams, too, left a wife, who was passionately fond of him. Conceive the terrible state in which the women are;—but none of us, I trust, have known Shelley for nothing: the Williamses doted on him; and—I know not what to say; but rely upon me, I fear nothing. I am cooler in general than while writing this, and besides the patience to which I have been accustomed, I must work hard for our new publication, which will still go on. Lord B. is very kind.

Pray, show or send Hogg this letter for him to see; and tell him I would have written him a separate one, but at present I am sure he will spare it me. I had already begun to enliven Shelley's hours with accounts of his pleasant sayings, and hoped to—but, good God, how are one's most confident expectations cut short! I embrace him, as my friend, and Shelley's.

Adieu, dearest Bessy, you will not wonder that I do not make this letter an answer to your last, which I was delighted to receive. It showed me you were well, and Henry out of danger.

Pray send the following to my brother for the *Examiner*.

Your ever most affectionate friend,

LEIGH HUNT.

His Last Letter and His Last Pun

Thomas Hood to Sir Robert Peel

Devonshire Lodge,
New Finchley Road, 1845.

Dear Sir,—

We are not to meet in the flesh. Given over by my physicians and by myself, I am only kept alive by frequent instalments of mulled port wine. In this extremity I feel a comfort, for which I cannot refrain from again thanking you with all the sincerity of a dying man—and, at the same time, bidding you a respectful farewell.

Thank God my mind is composed and my reason undisturbed, but my race as an author is run. My physical debility finds no tonic virtue in a steel pen, otherwise I would have written one more paper—a forewarning one—against an evil, or the danger of it, arising from a literary movement in which I have had some share, a one-sided humanity, opposite to that Catholic Shakesperian sympathy, which felt with King as well as Peasant, and duly estimated the mortal temptations of both stations. Certain classes at the poles of Society are already too far asunder; it should be the duty of our writers to draw them nearer by kindly attraction, not to aggravate the existing repulsion, and place a wider moral gulf between Rich and Poor, with Hate on the one side and Fear on the other. But I am too weak for this task, the last I had set myself; it is death that stops my pen, you see, and not the pension.[1]

God bless you, sir, and prosper all your measures for the benefit of my beloved country.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your most grateful and obedient Servant,
Thomas Hood.

[1] Through Sir Robert Peel the pension of £100 a year had been transferred from Hood's name to that of his wife.

His Purpose in the War

Abraham Lincoln to Horace Greeley

August 22, 1862.

I have just read yours of the 19th instant, addressed to myself through the "New York Tribune."

If there be in it any statements or assumptions of fact which I may know to be erroneous, I do not now and here controvert them.

If there be in it any inferences which I may believe to be falsely drawn, I do not now and here argue against them.

If there be perceptible in it an impatient and dictatorial tone, I waive it, in deference to an old friend whose heart I have always supposed to be right.

As to the policy I "seem to be pursuing," as you say, I have not meant to leave any one in doubt. I would save the Union. I would save it in the shortest way under the Constitution.

The sooner the national authority can be restored, the nearer the Union will be,—the Union as it was.

If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time save slavery, I do not agree with them.

If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time destroy slavery, I do not agree with them.

My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and not either to save or to destroy slavery.

If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that.

What I do about slavery and the coloured race, I do

because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union.

I shall do less whenever I shall believe that what I am doing hurts the cause; and I shall do more whenever I shall believe doing more will help the cause.

I shall try to correct errors where shown to be errors, and I shall adopt new views as fast as they shall appear to be true views.

I have here stated my purpose according to my views of official duty, and I intend no modification of my oft-expressed personal wish that all men everywhere could be free.

God Lifts a Sleeping Child

Robert Browning to Miss Haworth

Florence, *July* 20, 1861.

My dear Friend,—

I well know you feel as you say, for her once and for me now. . . . The main comfort is that she suffered very little pain, none beside that ordinarily attending the simple attacks of cold and cough she was subject to—had no presentiment of the result whatever and was consequently spared the misery of knowing she was about to leave us; she was smilingly assuring me she was "better, quite comfortable—if I would but come to bed" to within a few minutes of the last. . . . I sent the servants away and her maid to bed—so little reason for disquietude did there seem. Through the night she slept heavily, and brokenly—that was the bad sign—but then she would sit up, take her medicine, say unrepeatable things to me and sleep again. At four o'clock there were symptoms that alarmed me, and I called the maid and sent for the doctor. She smiled as I

proposed to bathe her feet. "Well, you *are* determined to make an exaggerated case of it." Then came what my heart will keep till I see her again, and longer—the most perfect expression of her love to me within my whole knowledge of her. Always smilingly, happily, and with a face like a girl's—and in a few minutes she died in my arms; her head on my cheek. These incidents so sustain me that I tell them to her beloved ones as their right: there was no lingering, nor acute pain, nor consciousness of separation, but God took her to himself as you would lift a sleeping child from a dark, uneasy bed into your arms and the light. Thank God.

Farewell

John Sterling to Thomas Carlyle

August 10, 1844.

My dear Carlyle,—For the first time for many months it seems possible to send you a few words; merely, however, for remembrance and farewell. On higher matters there is nothing to say. I tread the common road into the great darkness, without any thought of fear and with very much of hope. Certainty, indeed, I have none. With regard to You and Me I cannot begin to write, having nothing for it but to keep shut the lids of those secrets with all the iron weights that are in my power. Towards me it is still more true than towards England, that no man has been and done like you. Heaven bless you! If I can lend a hand when there, that will not be wanting. It is all very strange, but not a hundredth part so sad as it seems to the standers-by. Your wife knows my mind towards her, and will believe it without asseveration.

Yours to the last,

John Sterling.

The Death of Emily Brontë

Charlotte Brontë to W. S. Williams

December 25th, 1848.

My dear Sir,—I will write to you more at length when my heart can find a little rest—now I can only thank you very briefly for your letter, which seemed to me eloquent in its sincerity.

Emily [1] is nowhere here now, her wasted mortal remains are taken out of the house. We have laid her cherished head under the church aisle beside my mother's, my two sisters' —dead long ago—and my poor, hapless brother's. But a small remnant of the race is left—so my poor father thinks.

Well, the loss is ours, not hers, and some sad comfort I take, as I hear the wind blow and feel the cutting keenness of the frost, in knowing that the elements bring her no more suffering; their severity cannot reach her grave; her fever is quieted, her restlessness soothed, her deep, hollow cough is hushed for ever; we do not hear it in the night nor listen for it in the morning; we have not the conflict of the strangely strong spirit and the fragile frame before us—relentless conflict—once seen, never to be forgotten. A dreary calm reigns round us, in the midst of which we seek resignation.

My father and my sister Anne are far from well. As for me, God has hitherto most graciously sustained me; so far I have felt adequate to bear my own burden and even to offer a little help to others. I am not ill; I can get through daily duties, and do something towards keeping hope and energy alive in our mourning household. My father says to me almost hourly, "Charlotte, you must bear up, I shall sink if you fail me"; these words, you can conceive, are a

[1] Author of *Wuthering Heights.* (1818-1848.)

stimulus to nature. The sight, too, of my sister Anne's very still but deep sorrow wakens in me such fear for her that I dare not falter. Somebody *must* cheer the rest.

So I will not now ask why Emily was torn from us in the fulness of our attachment, rooted up in the prime of her own days, in the promise of her powers; why her existence now lies like a field of green corn trodden down, like a tree in full bearing struck at the root. I will only say, sweet is rest after labour and calm after tempest, and repeat again and again that Emily knows that now.—Yours sincerely,

C. Brontë.

A Man of Genius, Poet, Painter, Learns at Last that His Life has Failed

James Smetham to ——

30*th June,* 1877.

I feared a bad night, for oil and water produced "Bubble, bubble, toil and trouble," and "What to send to exhibitions" supervened. However, by 2 a. m. I somehow lost myself on foolish fancies, and waking upon the middle of the night knew I had been asleep and should sleep again. Not but that the garden choir sang shrill, and two or three cocks, taunting, far away, lifted up their voices on stilts out of the dawning, crying "Cock-a-doodle-doo! There's a man in Park Lane! Cock-a-doodle-doo! Who for twenty years! Has been trying to get on! And never will as long as he lives! Cock-a-doodle-doo!" And then the cock's big cousin, the steam-whistle, screamed in far perspective, "Just what I always said myself!" And the muffled rumble of the train to the north murmured, "Let us leave him to his devices; he doesn't do what we always told him!"

But two verses seemed given me for my comfort,

I shall triumph evermore,
Gratefully my God adore—
God so good, so true, so kind;
Jesus is a thankful mind.

I shall suffer and fulfil
All my Father's gracious will.
Be in all alike resigned:
Jesus is a patient mind.

VI

Letters to Eminent Persons

He proclaims himself.

Dr. Johnson (1709-1784)

She trusts she will never more feel ambitious to see her name in print.

Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855)

Declines the honour of the Grand Cross of the Bath together with a pension.

Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881)

He Proclaims Himself

Dr. Samuel Johnson to Lord Chesterfield[1]

February 7th, 1755.

My Lord,

I have been lately informed by the proprietor of *The World,* that two papers, in which my *Dictionary* is recommended to the public, were written by your lordship. To be so distinguished is an honour, which, being very little accustomed to favours from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

When, upon some slight encouragement I first visited your lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address, and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre;*—that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending; but I found my attend-

[1] In the early years of Johnson's Grub-Street life, he had vainly sued for Lord Chesterfield's patronage and had received only rebuffs. When seven years later the news spread abroad that Johnson's great work was completed and that the Dictionary was upon the eve of publication, Lord Chesterfield, who, it is said, had flattered himself with expectations that the magnum opus would be dedicated to himself, attempted, by writing two flattering papers in "The World," to bring about this desired result. Dr. Johnson, in discussing Lord Chesterfield's conduct with Boswell, said, "Sir, after making great professions, he had, for many years, taken no notice of me; but when my Dictionary was coming out, he fell a-scribbling in 'The World' about it. Upon which, I wrote him a letter, expressed in civil terms, but such as might show him that I did not mind what he said or wrote, and that I had done with him." This is that famous letter.

ance so little encouraged, that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your lordship in public, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

Seven years, my lord, have passed since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door, during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it at last to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before.

The shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

Is not a patron, my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron which providence has enabled me to do for myself.

Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favourer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation, my lord—Your lordship's most humble, most obedient servant

SAM. JOHNSON.

She Trusts She will Never More Feel Ambitious to See Her Name in Print

Charlotte Brontë to Robert Southey[1]

March 16, 1837.

Sir,—

I cannot rest till I have answered your letter, even though by addressing you a second time I should appear a little intrusive; but I must thank you for the kind and wise advice you have condescended to give me. I had not ventured to hope for such a reply; so considerate in its tone, so noble in its spirit. I must suppress what I feel, or you will think me foolishly enthusiastic.

At the first perusal of your letter, I felt only shame and regret that I had ever ventured to trouble you with my crude rhapsody; I felt a painful heat rise to my face when I thought of the quires of paper I had covered with what once gave me so much delight, but which now was only a source of confusion; but after I had thought a little and read it again and again, the prospect seemed to clear. You do not forbid me to write; you do not say that what I write is utterly destitute of merit. You only warn me against the folly of neglecting real duties for the sake of imaginative pleasures; of writing for the love of fame; for the selfish excitement of emulation. You kindly allow me to

[1] Charlotte Brontë, before her first book was published, had written to Southey, enclosing some of her poetry and asking for his criticism and advice. He had replied with a kindly letter in which he said: "The day dreams in which you habitually indulge are likely to induce a distempered state of mind; and in proportion as all the ordinary uses of the world seem to you flat and unprofitable, you will be unfitted for them without becoming fitted for anything else. Literature cannot be the business of a woman's life, and it ought not to be."

write poetry for its own sake, provided I leave undone nothing which I ought to do, in order to pursue that single, absorbing, exquisite gratification. I am afraid, Sir, you think me very foolish. I know the first letter I wrote to you was all senseless trash from beginning to end; but I am not altogether the idle dreaming being it would seem to denote. My father is a clergyman of limited, though competent income, and I am the eldest of his children. He expended quite as much in my education as he could afford in justice to the rest. I thought it therefore my duty, when I left school, to become a governess. In that capacity I find enough to occupy my thoughts all day long, and my head and hands too, without having a moment's time for one dream of the imagination. In the evenings, I confess, I do think, but I never trouble any one else with my thoughts. I carefully avoid any appearance of pre-occupation and eccentricity, which might lead those I live amongst to suspect the nature of my pursuits. Following my father's advice—who from my childhood has counselled me, just in the wise and friendly tone of your letter—I have endeavoured not only attentively to observe all the duties a woman ought to fulfil, but to feel deeply interested in them. I don't always succeed, for sometimes when I'm teaching or sewing, I would rather be reading or writing; but I try to deny myself; and my father's approbation amply rewarded me for the privation. Once more allow me to thank you with sincere gratitude. I trust I shall never more feel ambitious to see my name in print; if the wish should rise, I'll look at Southey's letter, and suppress it. It is honour enough for me that I have written to him, and received an answer. That letter is consecrated; no one shall ever see it, but papa and my brother and sisters. Again I thank you. This incident, I suppose, will be renewed no more; if I live to be an old woman, I shall re-

member it thirty years hence as a bright dream. The signature which you suspected of being fictitious is my real name. Again, therefore, I must sign myself,

C. Brontë.

P. S. Pray, sir, excuse me for writing to you a second time; I could not help writing, partly to tell you how thankful I am for your kindness, and partly to let you know that your advice shall not be wasted; however sorrowfully and reluctantly it may be at first followed. C. B.

Declines the Honour of the Grand Cross of the Bath Together with a Pension

Thomas Carlyle to Benjamin Disraeli

5, Cheyne Row, Chelsea, *December* 29, 1874.

Sir,—

Yesterday, to my great surprise, I had the honour to receive your letter containing a magnificent proposal for my benefit, which will be memorable to me for the rest of my life. Allow me to say that the letter, both in purport and expression, is worthy to be called magnanimous and noble, that it is without example in my own poor history; and I think it is unexampled, too, in the history of governing persons towards men of letters at the present, as at any time; and that I will carefully preserve it as one of the things precious to memory and heart. A real treasure or benefit, independent of all results from it.

This said to yourself and reposited with many feelings in my own grateful mind, I have only to add that your splendid and generous proposals for my practical behoof, must not any of them take effect; that titles of honour are, in all degrees of them, out of keeping with the tenour of my own poor existence hitherto in this epoch of the world, and

would be an encumbrance, not a furtherance to me; that as to money, it has, after long years of rigorous and frugal, but also (thank God, and those who are gone before me) not degrading poverty, become in this latter time amply abunant, even superabundant; more of it, too, now a hindrance, not a help to me; so that royal or other bounty would be more than thrown away in my case; and in brief, that except the feeling of your fine and noble conduct on this occasion, which is a real and permanent possession, there cannot anything be done that would not now be a sorrow rather than a pleasure.

With thanks more than usually sincere,

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obliged and obedient servant,

T. Carlyle.

VII

Great Occasions

He declareth to his brother-in-law that Marston Moor hath been won.

Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658)

Farewell.

Dr. Dodd (1729-1777)
Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709-1784)

To a mother.

Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865)

On the eve of departure.

William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863)

Her visit to London.

Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855)

An interview with Queen Victoria.

Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881)

He Declareth to His Brother-in-law that Marston Moor hath been Won

Oliver Cromwell to Colonel Valentine Walton

Leaguer before York, *5th July*, 1644.

Dear Sir,

It's our duty to sympathise in all mercies; and to praise the Lord together in chastisements or trials, that so we may sorrow together.

Truly England and the Church of God hath had a great favour from the Lord, in this great Victory given unto us, such as the like never was since this War began. It had all the evidences of an absolute Victory obtained by the Lord's blessing upon the Godly Party principally. We never charged but we routed the enemy. The Left Wing, which I commanded, being our own horse, saving a few Scots in our rear, beat all the Prince's [1] horse. God made them as stubble to our swords. We charged their regiments of foot with our horse, and routed all we charged. The particulars I cannot relate now; but I believe, of Twenty-thousand the Prince hath not Four-thousand left. Give glory, all the glory, to God.—

Sir, God hath taken away your eldest son [2] by a cannon-shot. It brake his leg. We were necessitated to have it cut off, whereof he died.

Sir, you know my own trials this way: [3] but the Lord sup-

[1] Prince Rupert of the Rhine.

[2] His own nephew.

[3] In the spring, Cromwell had lost his own son, Captain Oliver, who died not in battle, but of smallpox in his quarters at Newport. "He was a civil young gentleman, and the joy of his father," said a newspaper which recorded his death.

ported me with this, That the Lord took him into the happiness we all pant for and live for. There is your precious child full of glory, never to know sin or sorrow more. He was a gallant young man, exceeding gracious. God give you His comfort. Before his death he was so full of comfort that to Frank Russel and myself he could not express it, "It was so great above his pain." This he said to us. Indeed it was admirable. A little after, he said, One thing lay upon his spirit. I asked him, What that was? He told me it was, That God had not suffered him to be any more the executioner of His enemies. At his fall, his horse being killed with the bullet, and as I am informed three horses more, I am told he bid them, Open to the right and left, that he might see the rogues run. Truly he was exceedingly beloved in the Army, of all that knew him. But few knew him; for he was a precious young man, fit for God. You have cause to bless the Lord. He is a glorious saint in Heaven; wherein you ought exceedingly to rejoice. Let this drink-up your sorrow; seeing these are not feigned words to comfort you, but the thing is so real and undoubted a truth. You may do all things by the strength of Christ. Seek that, and you shall easily bear your trial. Let this public mercy to the Church of God make you to forget your private sorrow. The Lord be your strength: so prays your truly faithful and loving brother,

OLIVER CROMWELL.

My love to your Daughter, and my Cousin Perceval, Sister Desborow and all friends with you.

Farewell.

I

Dr. Dodd[1] *to Johnson*

June 25th, midnight.

Accept, thou *great* and *good* heart, my earnest and fervent thanks and prayers for all thy benevolent and kind efforts on my behalf—Oh! Dr. Johnson! as I sought your knowledge at an early hour in life, would to Heaven I had cultivated the love and acquaintance of so excellent a man! —I pray God most sincerely to bless you with the highest transports—the in-felt satisfaction of *humane* and benevolent exertions!—And admitted, as I trust I shall be, to the realms of bliss before you, I shall hail *your* arrival there with transports, and rejoice to acknowledge that you were my comforter, my advocate, and my *friend!* God be ever with *you!*

II

Johnson to Dr. Dodd

June 26, 1777.

Dear Sir,

That which is appointed to all men is now coming to you. Outward circumstances, the eyes and the thoughts of men, are below the notice of an immortal being about to stand

[1] Formerly prebendary of Brecon and chaplain in ordinary to the king; celebrated as a popular preacher, encourager of philanthropy, and author. Having contracted expensive and licentious habits, he became involved in debt and forged a bond in the name of Earl Chesterfield. For this he was arrested and sentenced to death. He appealed to Johnson, begging him to use his influence in the gaining of a reprieve. Johnson did his best, but failed. On June 27th, the day after he received Johnson's farewell letter, Dr. Dodd was executed.

the trial for eternity, before the Supreme Judge of heaven and earth. Be comforted: your crime, morally or religiously considered, has no very deep dye of turpitude. It corrupted no man's principles; it attacked no man's life. It involved only a temporary and reparable injury. Of this, and of all other sins, you are earnestly to repent; and may God, who knoweth our frailty, and desireth not our death, accept your repentance, for the sake of his son Jesus Christ, our Lord.

In requital of those well-intended offices which you are pleased so emphatically to acknowledge, let me beg that you make in your devotions one petition for my eternal welfare. I am, dear Sir, your most affectionate servant.

SAM. JOHNSON.

TO A MOTHER

Abraham Lincoln to Mrs. Bixby, of Boston

November 21, 1864.

DEAR MADAM, I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant-General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save. I pray that our heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

Yours very sincerely and respectfully,

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

On the Eve of Departure

William Makepeace Thackeray to Edward FitzGerald

October 27, 1852.

My dearest Old Friend,

I mustn't go away without shaking your hand, and saying Farewell and God Bless you. If anything happens to me, you by these presents must get ready the Book of Ballads which you like, and which I had not time to prepare before embarking on this voyage. And I should like my daughters to remember that you are the best and oldest friend their Father ever had, and that you would act as such: as my literary executor and so forth. My Books would yield a something as copyrights: and, should anything occur, I have commissioned friends in good place to get a pension for my poor little wife. . . . Does not this sound gloomily? Well: who knows what Fate is in store: and I feel not at all downcast, but very grave and solemn just at the brink of a great voyage.

I shall send you a copy of Esmond to-morrow or so which you shall yawn over when you are inclined. But the great comfort I have in thinking about my dear old boy is that recollection of our youth when we loved each other as I do now while I write Farewell.

Laurence has done a capital head of me ordered by Smith the Publisher: and I have ordered a copy and Lord Ashburton another. If Smith gives me this one, I shall send the copy to you. I care for you as you know, and always like to think that I am fondly and affectionately yours,

W. M. T.

I sail from Liverpool on Saturday Morning by the Canada for Boston.

Her Visit to London

Charlotte Brontë to Rev. P. Brontë

112 Gloucester Terrace,
Hyde Park, *June 14th,* 1851.

Dear Papa,—If all be well, and if Martha can get the cleaning, etc., done by that time, I think I shall be coming home about the end of next week or the beginning of the week after. I have been pretty well in London, only somewhat troubled with headaches, owing, I suppose, to the closeness and oppression of the air. The weather has not been so favourable as when I was last here, and in wet and dark days this great Babylon is not so cheerful. All the other sights seem to give way to the great Exhibition, into which thousands and tens of thousands continue to pour every day. I was in it again yesterday afternoon, and saw the ex-royal family of France—the old Queen, the Duchess of Orleans, and her two sons, etc., pass down the transept. I almost wonder the Londoners don't tire a little of this vast Vanity Fair—and, indeed, a new toy has somewhat diverted the attention of the grandees lately, viz., a fancy ball given last night by the Queen. The great lords and ladies have been quite wrapt up in preparations for this momentous event. Their pet and darling, Mr. Thackeray, of course sympathises with them. He was here yesterday to dinner, and left very early in the evening in order that he might visit respectively the Duchess of Norfolk, the Marchioness of Londonderry, Ladies Chesterfield and Clanricarde, and see them all in their fancy costumes of the reign of Charles II. before they set out for the Palace! His lectures, it appears, are a triumphant success. He says they will enable him to make a provision for his daughters; and Mr. Smith believes he will not get less than four thousand pounds by

them. He is going to give two courses, and then go to Edinburgh and perhaps America, but *not* under the auspices of Barnum. Amongst others, the Lord Chancellor attended his last lecture, and Mr. Thackeray says he expects a place from him; but in this I think he was joking. Of course Mr. T. is a good deal spoiled by all this, and indeed it cannot be otherwise. He has offered two or three times to introduce me to some of his great friends, and says he knows many great ladies who would receive me with open arms if I would go to their houses; but, seriously, I cannot see that this sort of society produces so good an effect on him as to tempt me in the least to try the same experiment, so I remain obscure.

Hoping you are well, dear papa, and with kind regards to Mr. Nicholls,[1] Tabby, and Martha, also poor old Keeper and Flossy,—I am, your affectionate daughter,

C. Brontë.

P.S.—I am glad the parlour is done and that you have got safely settled, but am quite shocked to hear of the piano being dragged up into the bedroom—there it must necessarily be absurd, and in the parlour it looked so well, besides being convenient for your books. I wonder why you don't like it.

An Interview with Queen Victoria

Thomas Carlyle to Mrs. Aitken

Chelsea, *March* 11, 1869.

Dear Jean,— . . . "Interview" took place this day gone a week; nearly a week before that, the Dean and Deaness (who is called Lady Augusta Stanley, once *Bruce,* an active hand and busy little woman) drove up here in a

[1] Her father's curate, whom she married 29th June, 1854.

solemnly mysterious, though half quizzical manner, invited me for Thursday, 4th, 5 p.m.:—must come, a very "high or indeed highest person has long been desirous," etc. etc. I saw well enough it was the Queen incognita; and briefly agreed to come. "Half-past 4 COME *you!*" and then went their ways.

Walking up at the set time, I was then ushered into a long drawing-room in their monastic edifice. I found no Stanley there; only at the farther end, a tall old Gearpole[1] of a Mrs. Grote,—the most wooden woman I know in London or the world, who thinks herself very clever, etc.,—the sight of whom taught me to expect others; as accordingly, in a few minutes, fell out. Grote and wife, Sir Charles Lyell and ditto, Browning and myself, were I saw to be our party. "Better than bargain! These will take the edge off the thing, if edge it have!"—which it hadn't, nor threatened to have.

The Stanleys and we were all in a flow of talk, and some flunkies had done setting coffee-pots, tea-cups of sublime patterns, when Her Majesty, punctual to a minute, glided softly in, escorted by her Dame in Waiting (a Dowager Duchess of Athol) and by the Princess Louise, decidedly a very pretty young lady, and *clever* too, as I found in speaking to her afterwards.

The Queen came softly forward, a kindly little smile on her face; gently shook hands with all three women, gently acknowledged with a nod the silent deep lion of us male monsters; and directly in her presence everybody was as if at ease again. She is a comely little lady, with a pair of kind, clear, and intelligent grey eyes; still looks plump and almost young (in spite of one broad wrinkle that shows in each cheek *occasionally*); has a fine low voice; soft indeed

[1] Irish weaver implement.

her whole manner is and melodiously perfect; it is impossible to imagine a *politer* little woman—nothing the least imperious; all gentle, all *sincere*-looking; unembarrassing, rather attractive even;—*makes* you feel too (if you have sense in you) that she is Queen.

After, a little word to each of us in succession as we stood,—to me it was, "Sorry you did not see my Daughter," Princess of Prussia (or, "she sorry," perhaps?) which led us into Potsdam, Berlin, etc., for an instant or two; to Sir Charles Lyell I heard her say "Gold in Sutherland," but quickly and delicately cut him *short* in responding; to Browning, "Are you writing anything?" (he has just been publishing the absurdest of things!); to Grote I did not hear what she said; but it was touch and go with everybody; Majesty visibly *without* interest or nearly so of her *own*.

This done, coffee (very black and muddy) was handed round; Queen and three women taking seats in opposite corners, Mrs. Grote in a chair *intrusively close* to Majesty, Lady Lyell modestly at the *diagonal* corner; we others obliged to stand, and hover within call. Coffee fairly done, Lady Augusta called me gently to "Come and speak with Her Majesty." I obeyed, first asking, as an old and infirmish man, Majesty's permission to *sit,* which was graciously conceded. Nothing of the least significance was said, nor *needed;* however, my bit of dialogue went very well. "What part of Scotland I came from?" "Dumfries-shire (where Majesty might as well go some time); Carlisle, *i.e. Caer-Lewal,* a place about the antiquity of King Solomon (according to Milton, whereat Majesty smiled); Border-Ballads (and even old Jamie Pool slightly alluded to,—not by name!); Glasgow, and even Grandfather's ride thither,—ending in mere *psalms,* and streets *vacant* at half-past nine p.m.;—hard sound and genuine Presbyterian *root* of what

has now shot up to be such a monstrous ugly cabbage-tree and Hemlock-tree!" all which Her Majesty seemed to take rather well.

Whereupon Mrs. Grote rose, and good naturedly brought forward her Husband to her own chair, *cheek by jowl* with Her Majesty, who evidently did not care a straw for him, but kindly asked "Writing anything?" and one heard "Aristotle, now that I have done with Plato," etc., etc.—but only for a minimum of time. Majesty herself (I think apropos of some question of my *shaking hand*) said something about her own difficulty in writing by dictation, which brought forward Lady Lyell and husband, naturally used to the operation—after which, talk becoming trivial, Majesty gracefully retired,—Lady Augusta with her,—and in ten minutes more, returned to receive our farewell bows; which, too, she did very prettily; and sailed out as if moving on skates, and bending her head towards us with a smile. By the Underground Railway I was home before seven, and out of the adventure, with only a headache of little moment.

Froude tells me there are foolish *myths* about the poor business, especially about my share of it, but this is the real truth;—*worth* to me, in strict speech, all but nothing; the *myths* even less than nothing. . . .

T. Carlyle.

VIII

Portraits

Impressionist sketch (full-length) of Adam.
William Cowper (1731-1800)

Elia flatters that he may console.
Charles Lamb (1775-1835)

George Dyer of burlesque memory.
Charles Lamb (1775-1835)

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Grotesque portrait of a vain man.
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Benjamin Robert Haydon (1786-1846)

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Allegra: Lord Byron's and Claire Clairmont's child.
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A portrait of George Sand.
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Extremely washable away.
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The noble lady.
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Thackeray for the last time.
Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881)

Christ on the cross.
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The dying friend.
Edward FitzGerald (1809-1883)

A sort of crucified expression.
Edward FitzGerald (1809-1883)

The Speddings: a family group.
Edward FitzGerald (1809-1883)

Shakespeare: an imaginary portrait.
James Smetham (1821-1889)

Impressionist Sketch (Full-Length) of Adam

William Cowper to the Rev. John Newton

February 10, 1784.

My dear Friend,—The morning is my writing time, and in the morning I have no spirits. So much the worse for my correspondents. Sleep that refreshes my body, seems to cripple me in every other respect.

As the evening approaches, I grow more alert, and when I am retiring to bed, am more fit for mental occupation than at any other time.

So it fares with us whom they call nervous. By a strange inversion of the animal economy, we are ready to sleep when we have most need to be awake, and go to bed just when we might sit up to some purpose.

The watch is irregularly wound up, it goes in the night when it is not wanted, and in the day stands still.

In many respects we have the advantage of our forefathers the Picts. We sleep in a whole skin, and are not obliged to submit to the painful operation of puncturing ourselves from head to foot in order that we may be decently dressed, and fit to appear abroad.

But, on the other hand, we have reason enough to envy them their tone of nerves, and that flow of spirits which effectually secured them from all uncomfortable impressions of a gloomy atmosphere, and from every shade of melancholy from every other cause. They understood, I suppose, the use of vulnerary herbs, having frequent occasion for some skill in surgery; but physicians, I presume, they had none, having no need of any.

Is it possible, that a creature like myself can be descended from such progenitors, in whom there appears not a single trace of family resemblance?

What an alteration have a few ages made? They, without clothing, would defy the severest season; and I, with all the accommodations that art has since invented, am hardly secure even in the mildest.

If the wind blows upon me when my pores are open, I catch cold. A cough is the consequence.

I suppose if such a disorder could have seized a Pict, his friends would have concluded that a bone had stuck in his throat, and that he was in some danger of choking.

They would perhaps have addressed themselves to the cure of his cough by thrusting their fingers into his gullet, which would only have exasperated the case.

But they would never have thought of administering laudanum, my only remedy. For this difference, however, that has obtained between me and my ancestors, I am indebted to the luxurious practices, and enfeebling self-indulgence, of a long line of grandsires, who from generation to generation have been employed in deteriorating the breed, till at last the collected effects of all their follies have centred in my puny self,—a man indeed, but not in the image of those that went before me;—a man, who sighs and groans, who wears out life in dejection and oppression of spirits, and who never thinks of the aborigines of the country to which he belongs, without wishing that he had been born among them. The evil is without a remedy, unless the ages that are passed could be recalled, my whole pedigree being permitted to live again, and being properly admonished to beware of enervating sloth and refinement, would preserve their hardiness of nature unimpaired, and transmit the desirable quality to their posterity. I once saw Adam in a dream. We sometimes say of a picture, that

we doubt not its likeness to the original, though we never saw him; a judgment we have some reason to form, when the face is strongly charactered, and the features full of expression.

So I think of my visionary Adam, and for a similar reason. His figure was awkward in the extreme. It was evident that he had never been taught by a Frenchman to hold his head erect, or to turn out his toes; to dispose gracefully of his arms, or to simper without a meaning. But if Mr. Bacon was called upon to produce a statue of Hercules, he need not wish for a juster pattern. He stood like a rock; the size of his limbs, the prominence of his muscles, and the height of his stature, all conspired to bespeak him a creature whose strength had suffered no diminution; and who, being the first of his race, did not come into the world under a necessity of sustaining a load of infirmities, derived to him from the intemperance of others.

He was as much stouter than a Pict, as I suppose a Pict to have been than I. Upon my hypothesis, therefore, there has been a gradual declension, in point of bodily vigour, from Adam down to me; at least if my dream were a just representation of that gentleman, and deserve the credit I cannot help giving it, such must have been the case.—Yours, my dear friend, W. C.

Elia Flatters that He May Console

Charles Lamb to Samuel Taylor Coleridge

October 9, 1800.

I suppose you have heard of the death of Amos Cottle.

I paid a solemn visit of condolence to his brother, accompanied by George Dyer, of burlesque memory. I went, trembling to see poor Cottle so immediately upon the event.

He was in black; and his younger brother was also in black.

Everything wore an aspect suitable to the respect due to the freshly dead. For some time after our entrance, nobody spoke till George modestly put in a question, whether *Alfred* was likely to sell.

This was *Lethe* to Cottle, and his poor face, wet with tears, and his kind eye brightened up in a moment. Now I felt it was my cue to speak.

I had to thank him for a present of a magnificent copy, and had promised to send him my remarks,—the least thing I could do; so I ventured to suggest, that I perceived a considerable improvement he had made in his first book since the state in which he first read it to me. Joseph until now had sat with his knees cowering in by the fire-place, and with great difficulty of body shifted the same round to the corner of a table where I was sitting, and first stationing one thigh over the other, which is his sedentary mood, and placidly fixing his benevolent face right against mine, waited my observations.

At that moment it came strongly into my mind, that I had got Uncle Toby before me, he looked so kind and good.

I could not say an unkind thing of *Alfred*. So I set my memory to work to recollect what was the name of Alfred's Queen, and with some adroitness recalled the well-known sound to Cottle's ears of Alswitha.

At that moment I could perceive that Cottle had forgot his brother was so lately become a blessed spirit. In the language of mathematicians, the author was as 9, the brother as 1.

I felt my cue, and strong pity working at the root I went to work, and beslabbered *Alfred* with most unqualified praise, or only qualifying my praise by the occasional politic interposition of an exception taken against trivial faults,

slips, and human imperfections, which, by removing the appearance of insincerity, did but in truth heighten the relish.

Perhaps I might have spared that refinement, for Joseph was in a humour to hope and believe *all things.*

What I said was beautifully supported, corroborated and confirmed by the stupidity of his brother on my left hand, and by George on my right, who has an utter incapacity of comprehending that there can be anything bad in poetry.

All poems are *good* poems to George; all men are *fine geniuses.*

So what with my actual memory, of which I made the most, and Cottle's own helping me out, for I had really forgotten a good deal of *Alfred,* I made shift to discuss the most essential parts entirely to the satisfaction of its author, who repeatedly declared that he loved nothing better than *candid* criticism. Was I a candid greyhound now for all this? or did I do right? I believe I did. The effect was luscious to my conscience.

For all the rest of the evening Amos was no more heard of, till George revived the subject by inquiring whether some account should not be drawn up by the friends of the deceased to be inserted in Philips' Monthly Obituary; adding, that Amos was estimable both for his head and heart, and would have made a fine poet if he had lived.

To the expediency of this measure Cottle fully assented, but could not help adding that he always thought that the qualities of his brother's heart exceeded those of his head.

I believe his brother, when living, had formed precisely the same idea of him; and I apprehend the world will assent to both judgments.

I rather guess that the brothers were poetical rivals. I judged so when I saw them together.

Poor Cottle, I must leave him after his short dream to muse again upon his poor brother, for whom I am sure in secret he will yet shed many a tear. Now send me in return some Greta News. C. L.

George Dyer of Burlesque Memory

Charles Lamb to John Rickman

[? *November,* 1801.]

A letter from G. Dyer will probably accompany this. I wish I could convey to you any notion of the whimsical scenes I have been witness to in this fortnight past. 'Twas on Tuesday week the poor heathen scrambled up to my door about breakfast time. He came thro' a violent rain with no neckcloth on, and a *beard* that made him a spectacle to men and angels, and tap'd at the door. Mary open'd it, and he stood stark still and held a paper in his hand importing that he had been ill with a fever. He either wouldn't or couldn't speak except by signs. When you went to comfort him he put his hand upon his heart and shook his head and told us his complaint lay where no medicines could reach it. I was dispatch'd for Dr. Dale, Mr. Phillips of St. Paul's Churchyard, and Mr. Frend, who is to be his executor. George solemnly delivered into Mr. Frend's hands and mine an old burnt preface that had been in the fire, with injunctions which we solemnly vow'd to obey that it should be printed after his death with his last corrections, and that some account should be given to the world why he had not fulfill'd his engagement with subscribers. Having done this and borrow'd two guineas of his bookseller (to whom he imparted in confidence that he should leave a great many loose papers behind him which would only want methodising and arranging to prove very lucrative to any bookseller

after his death), he laid himself down on my bed in a mood of complacent resignation. By the aid of meat and drink put into him (for I all along suspected a vacuum) he was enabled to sit up in the evening, but he had not got the better of his intolerable fear of dying; he expressed such philosophic indifference in his speech and such frightened apprehensions in his physiognomy that if he had truly been dying, and I had known it, I could not have kept my countenance. In particular, when the doctor came and ordered him to take little white powders (I suppose of chalk or alum, to humour him), he ey'd him with a *suspicion* which I could not account for; he has since explain'd that he took it for granted Dr. Dale knew his situation and had ordered him these powders to hasten his departure that he might suffer as little pain as possible. Think what an aspect the heathen put on with these fears upon a dirty face. To recount all his freaks for two or three days while he thought he was going, and how the fit operated, and sometimes the man got uppermost and sometimes the author, and he had this excellent person to serve, and he must correct some proof sheets for Phillips, and he could not bear to leave his subscribers unsatisfy'd, but he must not think of these things now, he was going to a place where he should satisfy all his debts—and when he got a little better he began to discourse what a happy thing it would be if there was a place where all the good men and women in the world might meet, meaning heav'n, and I really believe for a time he had doubts about his soul, for he was very near, if not quite, light-headed. The fact was he had not had a good meal for some days and his little dirty Niece (whom he sent for with a still dirtier Nephew and hugg'd him, and bid them farewell) told us that unless he dines out he subsists on tea and gruels. And he corroborated this tale by ever and anon complaining of sensations of gnawing which he felt about

his *heart,* which he mistook his stomach to be, and sure enough these gnawings were dissipated after a meal or two, and he surely thinks that he has been rescued from the jaws of death by Dr. Dale's white powders. He is got quite well again by nursing, and chirps of odes and lyric poetry the day long—he is to go out of town on Monday, and with him goes the dirty train of his papers and books which follow'd him to our house. I shall not be sorry when he takes his nipt carcase out of my bed, which it has occupied, and vanishes with all his Lyric lumber, but I will endeavour to bring him in future into a method of dining at least once a day. I have proposed to him to dine with me (and he has nearly come into it) whenever he does not go out; and pay me. I will take his money beforehand and he shall eat it out. If I don't it will go all over the world. Some worthless relations, of which the dirty little devil that looks after him and a still more dirty nephew are component particles, I have reason to think divide all his gains with some lazy worthless authors that are his constant satellites. The Literary Fund has voted him seasonably £20, and if I can help it he shall spend it on his own carcase. I have assisted him in arranging the remainder of what he calls Poems and he will get rid of 'em I hope in another. . . .

What do you think of a life of G. Dyer? I can scarcely conceive a more amusing novel. He has been connected with all sects in the world and he will faithfully tell all he knows. Everybody will read it; and if it is not done according to my fancy I promise to put him in a novel when he dies. Nothing shall escape *me.* If you think it feasible, whenever you write you may encourage him. Since he has been so close with me I have perceiv'd the workings of his inordinate vanity, his gigantic attention to particles and to prevent open vowels in his odes, his solicitude that the public may not lose any tittle of his poems by his death, and

all the while his utter ignorance that the world don't care a pin about his odes and his criticisms, a fact which everybody knows but himself—he *is a rum genius.* C. L.

Hypothetical Portrait of a Mad Dog

Charles Lamb to Mr. Patmore

Mrs. Leishman's, Chace, Enfield, *September,* 1827.

Dear Patmore,—Excuse my anxiety—but how is Dash? (I should have asked if Mrs. Patmore kept her rules, and was improving—but Dash came uppermost. The order of our thoughts should be the order of our writing.) Goes he muzzled, or *aperto ore?* Are his intellects sound, or does he wander a little in *his* conversation? You cannot be too careful to watch the first symptoms of incoherence. The first illogical snarl he makes, to St. Luke's with him! All the dogs here are going mad, if you believe the overseers; but I protest they seem to me very rational and collected. But nothing is so deceitful as mad people to those who are not used to them. Try him with hot water. If he won't lick it up, it is a sign he does not like it. Does his tail wag horizontally or perpendicularly? That has decided the fate of many dogs in Enfield. Is his general deportment cheerful? I mean when he is pleased—for otherwise there is no judging. You can't be too careful. Has he bit any of the children yet? If he has, have them shot, and keep *him* for curiosity, to see if it was the hydrophobia. They say all our army in India had it at one time—but that was in *Hyder*-Ally's time. Do you get paunch for him? Take care the sheep was sane. You might pull out his teeth (if he would let you), and then you need not mind if he were as mad as a Bedlamite. It would be rather fun to see his odd ways. It might amuse Mrs. Patmore and the children. They'd have more sense than he! He'd be like a Fool kept

in the family to keep the household in good humour with their own understanding. You might teach him the mad howl. *Madge Owl-et* would be nothing to him. "My, how he capers!" [*In the margin is written:* One of the children speaks this.]

[*Three lines here are erased.*] What I scratch out is a German quotation from Lessing on the bite of rabid animals; but, I remember, you don't read German. But Mrs. Patmore may, so I wish I had let it stand. The meaning in English is—"Avoid to approach an animal suspected of madness, as you would avoid fire or a precipice:—" which I think is a sensible observation. The Germans are certainly profounder than we.

If the slightest suspicion arises in your breast, that all is not right with him (Dash), muzzle him, and lead him in a string (common pack-thread will do; he don't care for twist) to Hood's, his quondam master, and he'll take him in at any time. You may mention your suspicion or not, as you like, or as you think it may wound or not Mr. H.'s feelings. Hood, I know, will wink at a few follies in Dash, in consideration of his former sense. Besides, Hood is deaf, and if you hinted anything, ten to one he would not hear you. Besides, you will have discharged your conscience, and laid the child at the right door, as they say.

The Picture of a By-gone Age

Charles Lamb to Mr. Robinson

Colebrooke Row, Islington,
Saturday, January 20, 1827.

Dear Robinson,—I called upon you this morning, and found that you were gone to visit a dying friend. I had been upon a like errand. Poor Norris has been lying dying for now almost a week, such is the penalty we pay for hav-

ing enjoyed a strong constitution! Whether he knew me or not, I know not, or whether he saw me through his poor glazed eyes; but the group I saw about him I shall not forget. Upon the bed, or about it, were assembled his wife and two daughters, and poor deaf Richard, his son, looking doubly stupified. There they were, and seemed to have been sitting all the week. I could only reach out a hand to Mrs. Norris. Speaking was impossible in that mute chamber. By this time I hope it is all over with him. In him I have a loss the world cannot make up. He was my friend and my father's friend all the life I can remember. I seem to have made foolish friendships ever since. Those are friendships which outlive a second generation. Old as I am waxing, in his eyes I was still the child he first knew me. To the last he called me Charley. I have none to call me Charley now. He was the last link that bound me to the Temple. You are but of yesterday. In him seem to have died the old plainness of manners and singleness of heart. Letters he knew nothing of, nor did his reading extend beyond the pages of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Yet there was a pride of literature about him from being amongst books (he was librarian), and from some scraps of doubtful Latin which he had picked up in his office of entering students, that gave him very diverting airs of pedantry. Can I forget the erudite look with which, when he had been in vain trying to make out a black-letter text of Chaucer in the Temple Library, he laid it down and told me that—"in those old books, Charley, there is sometimes a deal of very indifferent spelling;" and seemed to console himself in the reflection! His jokes, for he had his jokes, are now ended, but they were old trusty perennials, staples that pleased after *decies repetita*, and were always as good as new. One song he had, which was reserved for the night of Christmas-day, which we always spent in the Temple. It

was an old thing, and spoke of the flat bottoms of our foes and the possibility of their coming over in darkness, and alluded to threats of an invasion many years blown over; and when he came to the part

> "We'll still make 'em run, and we'll still make 'em sweat,
> In spite of the devil and *Brussels Gazette!*"

his eyes would sparkle as with the freshness of an impending event. And what is the *Brussels Gazette* now? I cry while I enumerate these trifles. "How shall we tell them in a stranger's ear?" His poor good girls will now have to receive their afflicted mother in an inaccessible hovel in an obscure village in Herts, where they have been long struggling to make a school without effect; and poor deaf Richard—and the more helpless for being so—is thrown on the wide world.

My first motive in writing, and, indeed, in calling on you, was to ask if you were enough acquainted with any of the Benchers, to lay a plain statement before them of the circumstances of the family. I almost fear not, for you are of another hall. But if you can oblige me and my poor friend, who is now insensible to any favours, pray exert yourself. You cannot say too much good of poor Norris and his poor wife.—Yours ever,

CHARLES LAMB.

GROTESQUE PORTRAIT OF A VAIN MAN

Benjamin Robert Haydon to Miss Mitford

London, 10*th November,* 1825.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have spent three hours with Hazlitt to-day, and spent them with great delight. We talked of Michel Angelo, of Raphael, and—the greatest of all is behind—Leigh Hunt,

till we roared with laughter, and made more noise with our laughing than all the coaches, wagons, and carts in Piccadilly. From what Hazlitt has told me of him in Italy, I do think, upon my soul, that he is the most extraordinary character I ever met with in history, poetry, tragedy, comedy, or romance. By his conduct in Italy he has personified what, in idea, would be called extravagant. Hazlitt found him moulting near Florence. There he stuck, says Hazlitt, dull as a hen under a pent-house on a rainy day. Hazlitt offered to take him to Venice, free of expense. No. He never went to Rome, Bologna, or Naples. He passed through Paris, and never went into the Louvre, though staying two days! Not he! He was annoyed that Venice, Bologna, Naples, or Paris should contain anything more attractive than Mr. Leigh Hunt; and, consequently, he stuck to his house, expecting a deputation from each town to welcome him to Italy; and because no deputation came he would not honour them by a visit; thus leaving unhappy Venice, unfortunate Bologna, insignificant Florence, and unknown Rome to bewail their destiny to oblivion, because they had not been immortalized by the notice of illustrious Leigh! . . . Hazlitt laughed, roared, beat the table, at this realization of our predictions. When he dies he would smile with self-complacency at the just estimation of his genius, if the Devil made him poet-laureate, while the flames were writhing his vitals. And if he went to heaven—which I hope he may—he would compare himself with the Creator, and chuckle at the idea that, in making man in His own image, the Almighty had been the means of generating at least one in creation whose look and air might render it doubtful to the angels who had existed first. Such is Leigh—

> With a nose lightsomely brought
> Down from a forehead of clear-spirited thought.

Said Hazlitt, "I'll take you to Rimini." No; Rimini, the town, was not the poem; he wouldn't stir. Sorry I am to write so much of a man in whose acquaintance I can no longer feel any pride. He ruined Keats; he has injured me; he perverted Byron. Poor Shelley was drowned in going back from visiting him. Like Scylla, where he comes grass never grows; and when he treads on what is growing, it withers, as if the cloven hoof of hell had poisoned it.

Hazlitt looks ill; but his jaunt has done him great good, and his present wife a greater. She is a very superior woman, and will make him a decent being in regard to washing his face and hands (et cetera). He was breakfasting to-day as a gentleman should, and seemed to be living "cleanly," as a gentleman ought. I like Hazlitt, in spite of all: everybody must.[1]

I write this at the moment of my return. I can never think of Leigh Hunt again without sorrow.

Portrait of a Butcher

Benjamin Robert Haydon to Miss Mitford

18*th August,* 1826.

The other night I paid my butcher; one of the miracles of these times, you will say. Let me tell you I have all my life been seeking for a butcher whose respect for genius predominated over his love of gain. I could not make out, before I dealt with this man, his excessive desire that I

[1] At the very time that this letter was written, the second Mrs. Hazlitt had made up her mind to separate from her husband. She remained behind in Paris on his coming to London and does not appear to have ever rejoined him. Perhaps Haydon's second-hand judgment of Leigh Hunt's conduct in Italy is no more to be trusted than his surface glance at Hazlitt's domestic joy. The truth is, Leigh Hunt had too large a family and too little money to do much travelling.

should be his customer; his sly hints as I passed his shop that he had "a bit of South Down, very fine; a sweetbread, perfection; and a calf's foot that was all jelly without bone!" The other day he called and I had him sent up into the painting-room. I found him in great admiration of "Alexander." "Quite alive, sir!" "I am glad you think so," said I. "Yes, sir; but as I have said often to my sister, you could not have painted that picture, sir, if you had not eat my meat, sir!" "Very true, Mr. Sowerby." "Ah! sir, I have a fancy for *genus,* sir!" "Have you, Mr. Sowerby?" "Yes, sir; Mrs. Siddons, sir, has eat my meat, sir; never was *such a woman for chops, sir!*"—and he drew up his beefy, shiny face, clean-shaved, with a clean blue cravat under his chin, a clean jacket, a clean apron, and a pair of hands that would pin an ox to the earth if he was obstreperous—"Ah! sir, she was a wonderful crayture!" "She was, Mr. Sowerby." "Ah! sir, when she used to act that there character, you see (but Lord, such a head! as I say to my sister)—that there woman, sir, that murders a king between 'em!" "Oh, Lady Macbeth." "Ah! sir, that's it—Lady Macbeth—I used to get up with the butler behind her carridge when she acted, and, as I used to see her looking quite wild, and all the people quite frightened, "Ah, ha! my lady," says I, "if it wasn't for my meat, though, you wouldn't be able to do *that!*" "Mr. Sowerby, you seem to be a man of feeling; will you take a glass of wine?" After a bow or two, down he sat, and by degrees his heart opened. "You see, sir, I have fed Mrs. Siddons, sir; John Kemble, sir; Charles Kemble, sir; Stephen Kemble, sir; and Madam Catalini, sir; Morland the painter, and, I beg your pardon, sir, and *you,* sir." "Mr. Sowerby, you do me honour." "Madam Catalini, sir, was a wonderful woman for sweetbreads; but the Kemble family, sir, the gentlemen, sir, rump-steaks and kidneys in general was

their taste; but Mrs. Siddons, sir, she liked chops, sir, as much as you do, sir," etc., etc. I soon perceived that the man's ambition was to feed genius. I shall recommend you to him; but is he not a capital fellow? But a little acting with his remarks would make you roar with laughter. Think of Lady Macbeth eating chops! Is this not a peep behind the curtain? I remember Wilkie saying that at a public dinner he was looking out for some celebrated man, when at last he caught a glimpse for the first time of a man whose books he had read with care for years, picking the leg of a roast goose perfectly abstracted!

Recalling His Cambridge Days

Lord Byron to John Murray

Ravenna, 9*bre* 19, 1820.

What you said of the late Charles Skinner Matthews has set me to my recollections; but I have not been able to turn up anything which would do for the proposed Memoir of his brother—even if he had previously done enough during his life to sanction the production of anecdotes so merely personal. He was, however, a very extraordinary man, and would have been a great one. No one ever succeeded in a more surpassing degree than he did as far as he went. He was indolent, too; but whenever he stripped, he overthrew all antagonists. His conquests will be found registered at Cambridge, particularly his *Downing* one, which was hotly and highly contested, and yet easily *won*. Hobhouse was his most intimate friend, and can tell you more of him than any man. William Bankes also a great deal. I myself recollect more of his oddities than of his academical qualities, for we lived most together at a very idle period of *my* life. When I went up to Trinity, in 1805, at the age of seventeen and a-half, I was miserable and untoward to a

degree. I was wretched at leaving Harrow, to which I had become attached during the two last years of my stay there; wretched at going to Cambridge instead of Oxford (there were no rooms vacant at Christ-church); wretched from some private domestic circumstances of different kinds, and consequently about as unsocial as a wolf taken from the troop. So that, although I knew Matthews, and met him often *then* at Bankes's (who was my collegiate pastor, and master, and patron), and at Rhodes's, Milnes's, Price's, Dick's, Macnamara's, Farrell's, Galley Knight's, and others of that *set* of contemporaries, yet I was neither intimate with him nor with any one else, except my old school-fellow, Edward Long (with whom I used to pass the day in riding and swimming), and William Bankes, who was good-naturedly tolerant of my ferocities.

It was not till 1807, after I had been upwards of a year away from Cambridge, to which I had returned again to *reside* for my degree, that I became one of Matthews's familiars, by means of Hobhouse,[1] who, after hating me for two years, because I wore a *white hat* and a *grey* coat, and rode a *grey* horse (as he says himself), took me into his good graces because I had written some poetry. I had always lived a good deal, and got drunk occasionally, in their company—but now we became really friends in a morning. Matthews, however, was not at this period resident in College. I met *him* chiefly in London, and at uncertain periods at Cambridge. Hobhouse, in the meantime, did great things: he founded the Cambridge "Whig Club" (which he seems to have forgotten), and the "Amicable Society," which was dissolved in consequence of the members constantly quarrelling, and made himself very popular

[1] John Cam Hobhouse, who in later years became Baron Broughton, was Lord Byron's executor and therefore shared the responsibility of the destruction of the famous Memoirs.

with "us youth," and no less formidable to all tutors, professors, and heads of Colleges.

Matthews and I, meeting in London, and elsewhere, became great cronies. He was not good-tempered—nor am I—but with a little tact his temper was manageable, and I thought him so superior a man, that I was willing to sacrifice something to his humours, which were often, at the same time, amusing and provoking. What became of his *papers* (and he certainly had many), at the time of his death, was never known. I mention this by the way, fearing to skip it over, and *as* he *wrote* remarkably well, both in Latin and English. We went down to Newstead together, where I had got a famous cellar, and *Monks'* dresses from a masquerade warehouse. We were a company of some seven or eight, with an occasional neighbour or so for visitors, and used to sit up late in our friars' dresses, drinking burgundy, claret, champagne, and what not, out of the *skull-cup,* and all sorts of glasses, and buffooning all round the house, in our conventual garments. Matthews always denominated me "the Abbot," and never called me by any other name in his good humours, to the day of his death. The harmony of these our symposia was somewhat interrupted, a few days after our assembling, by Matthews's threatening to throw Hobhouse out of a *window,* in consequence of I know not what commerce of jokes ending in this epigram. Hobhouse came to me and said, that "his respect and regard for me as host would not permit him to call out any of my guests, and that he should go to town next morning." He did. It was in vain that I represented to him that the window was not high and that the turf under it was particularly soft. Away he went.

Matthews and myself had travelled down from London together, talking all the way incessantly upon one single topic. When we got to Loughborough, I know not what

chasm had made us diverge for a moment to some other subject, at which he was indignant. "Come," said he, "don't let us break through—let us go on as we began, to our journey's end;" and so he continued, and was as entertaining as ever to the very end. He had previously occupied, during my year's absence from Cambridge, my rooms in Trinity, with the furniture; and Jones, the tutor, in his odd way, had said, on putting him in, "Mr. Matthews, I recommend to your attention not to damage any of the movables, for Lord Byron, sir, is a young man of *tumultuous passions.*" Matthews was delighted with this; and whenever anybody came to visit him, begged them to handle the very door with caution; and used to repeat Jones's admonition in his tone and manner. There was a large mirror in the room, on which he remarked, "that he thought his friends were grown uncommonly assiduous in coming to *see him,* but he soon discovered that they only came to *see themselves.*" Jones's phrase of "*tumultuous passions,*" and the whole scene, had put him into such good humour, that I verily believe that I owed to it a portion of his good graces.

When at Newstead, somebody by accident rubbed against one of his white silk stockings, one day before dinner; of course the gentleman apologised. "Sir," answered Matthews, "it may be all very well for you, who have a great many silk stockings, to dirty other people's; but to me, who have only this *one pair,* which I have put on in honour of the Abbot here, no apology can compensate for such carelessness; besides, the expense of washing." He had the same sort of droll sardonic way about everything. A wild Irishman, named Farrell, one evening beginning to say something at a large supper at Cambridge, Matthews roared out "Silence"! and then, pointing to Farrell, cried out, in the words of the oracle, "*Orson is endowed with reason.*" You may easily suppose that Orson lost what

reason he had acquired, on hearing this compliment. When Hobhouse published his volume of poems, the *Miscellany* (which Matthews *would* call the "*Miss-sell-any*"), all that could be drawn from him was that the preface was "extremely like *Walsh*." Hobhouse thought this at first a compliment; but we never could make out what it was, for all we know of *Walsh* is his Ode to King William, and Pope's epithet of "*knowing Walsh*." When the Newstead party broke up for London, Hobhouse and Matthews, who were the greatest friends possible, agreed, for a whim, to *walk together* to town. They quarrelled by the way, and actually walked the latter half of their journey, occasionally passing and repassing, without speaking. When Matthews had got to Highgate, he had spent all his money but threepence halfpenny, and determined to spend that also in a pint of beer, which I believe he was drinking before a public house, as Hobhouse passed him (still without speaking) for the last time on their route. They were reconciled in London again.

One of Matthews's passions was "the Fancy;" and he sparred uncommonly well. But he always got beaten in rows, or combats with the bare fist. In swimming, too, he swam well; but with *effort* and *labour,* and *too high* out of the water; so that Scrope Davies and mysel[f], of whom he was therein somewhat emulous, always told him that he would be drowned if ever he came to a difficult pass in the water. He was so; but surely Scrope and myself would have been most heartily glad that

> "the Dean had lived,
> And our prediction proved a lie."

His head was uncommonly handsome, very like what *Pope's* was in his youth.

His voice, and laugh, and features are strongly resembled by his brother Henry's, if Henry be *he* of *King's College*. His passion for boxing was so great, that he actually wanted

me to match him with Dogherty (whom I had backed and made the match for against Tom Belcher), and I saw them spar together at my own lodgings with the gloves on. As he was bent upon it, I would have backed Dogherty to please him, but the match went off. It was of course to have been a private fight, in a private room.

On one occasion, being too late to go home and dress, he was equipped by a friend (Mr. Baillie, I believe), in a magnificently fashionable and somewhat exaggerated shirt and neckcloth. He proceeded to the Opera, and took his station in Fop's Alley. During the interval between the opera and the ballet, an acquaintance took his station by him and saluted him: "Come round," said Matthews, "come round."—"Why should I come round?" said the other; "you have only to turn your head—I am close to you."—"That is exactly what I cannot do," said Matthews; "don't you see the state I am in?" pointing to his buckram shirt collar and inflexible cravat,—and there he stood with his head always in the same perpendicular position during the whole spectacle.

One evening, after dining together, as we were going to the Opera, I happened to have a spare Opera ticket (as subscriber to a box), and presented it to Matthews, "Now, sir," said he to Hobhouse afterwards, "this I call *courteous* in the Abbot—another man would never have thought that I might do better with half a guinea than throw it to a door-keeper;—but here is a man not only asks me to dinner, but gives me a ticket for the theatre." These were only his oddities, for no man was more liberal, or more honourable in all his doings and dealings, than Matthews. He gave Hobhouse and me, before we set out for Constantinople, a most splendid entertainment, to which we did ample justice. One of his fancies was dining at all sorts of out-of-the-way places. Somebody popped upon him in I know not what

coffee-house in the Strand—and what do you think was the attraction? Why, that he paid a shilling (I think) to *dine with his hat on.* This he called his "*hat* house" and used to boast of the comfort of being covered at meal-times.

When Sir Henry Smith was expelled from Cambridge for a row with a tradesman named "Hiron," Matthews solaced himself with shouting under Hiron's windows every evening,

> **Ah me! what perils do environ**
> **The man who meddles with *hot Hiron.***

He was also of that band of profane scoffers who under the auspices of ——, used to rouse Lort Mansel (late Bishop of Bristol) from his slumbers in the lodge of Trinity; and when he appeared at the window foaming with wrath, and crying out, "I know you, gentlemen, I know you!" were wont to reply, "We beseech thee to hear us, good *Lort*"—"Good *Lort* deliver us!" (Lort was his Christian name.) As he was very free in his speculations upon all kinds of subjects, although by no means either dissolute or intemperate in his conduct, and as I was no less independent, our conversation and correspondence used to alarm our friend Hobhouse to a considerable degree.

You must be almost tired of my packets, which will have cost a mint of postage.

Salute Gifford and all my friends,

Yours, etc.

Allegra: Lord Byron's and Claire Clairmont's Child

Percy Bysshe Shelley to Mrs. Shelley

Ravenna, *August* 15, 1821.

I went the other day to see Allegra at her convent, and stayed with her about three hours. She is grown tall and

slight for her age, and her face is somewhat altered. The traits have become more delicate, and she is much paler, probably from the effect of improper food. She yet retains the beauty of her deep blue eyes and of her mouth, but she has a contemplative seriousness which, mixed with her excessive vivacity, which has not yet deserted her, has a very peculiar effect in a child. She is under very strict discipline, as may be observed from the immediate obedience she accords to the will of her attendants. This seems contrary to her nature, but I do not think it has been obtained at the expense of much severity. Her hair, scarcely darker than it was, is beautifully profuse, and hangs in large curls on her neck. She was prettily dressed in white muslin, and an apron of black silk, with trousers. Her light and airy figure and her graceful motions were a striking contrast to the other children there. She seemed a thing of a finer and a higher order. At first she was very shy, but after a little caressing, and especially after I had given her a gold chain which I had bought at Ravenna for her, she grew more familiar, and led me all over the garden, and all over the convent, running and skipping so fast that I could hardly keep up with her. She showed me her little bed, and the chair where she sat at dinner, and the carozzina in which she and her favourite companions drew each other along a walk in the garden. I had brought her a basket of sweetmeats, and before eating any of them she gave her companions and each of the nuns a portion. This is not much like the old Allegra. I asked her what I should say from her to her mamma, and she said:

"Che mi manda un bacio e un bel vestituro."

"E come vuoi il vestituro sia fatto?"

"Tutto di seta e d'oro," was her reply.

Her predominant foible seems the love of distinction and vanity, and this is a plant which produces good or evil,

according to the gardener's skill. I then asked her what I should say to papa? "Che venga farmi un visitino e che porta seco la *mammina.*" Before I went away she made me run all over the convent, like a mad thing. The nuns, who were half in bed, were ordered to hide themselves, and on returning Allegra began ringing the bell which calls the nuns to assemble. The tocsin of the convent sounded, and it required all the efforts of the Prioress to prevent the spouses of God from rendering themselves, dressed or undressed, to the accustomed signal. Nobody scolded her for these *scappature,* so I suppose she is well treated, so far as temper is concerned. Her intellect is not much cultivated. She knows certain *orazioni* by heart, and talks and dreams of Paradiso and all sorts of things, and has a prodigious list of saints, and is always talking of the Bambino. This will do her no harm, but the idea of bringing up so sweet a creature in the midst of such trash till sixteen!

The Scotch and Irish Nations

John Keats to Thomas Keats

Ballantrae, *July* 10, 1818.

I will speak as far as I can judge on the Irish and Scotch —I know nothing of the higher Classes—yet I have a persuasion that there the Irish are victorious. As to the "Profanum vulgus" I must incline to the Scotch. They never laugh—but they are always comparatively neat and clean. Their constitutions are not so remote and puzzling as the Irish. The Scotchman will never give a decision on any point—he will never commit himself in a sentence which may be referred to as a meridian in his notion of things—so that you do not know him—and yet you may come in nigher neighbourhood to him than to the Irishman who commits himself in so many places that it dazes your

head. A Scotchman's motive is more easily discovered than an Irishman's. A Scotchman will go wisely about to deceive you, an Irishman cunningly. An Irishman would bluster out of any discovery to his disadvantage. A Scotchman would retire perhaps without much desire for revenge. An Irishman likes to be thought a gallous fellow. A Scotchman is contented with himself. It seems to me they are both sensible of the Character they hold in England and act accordingly to Englishmen. Thus the Scotchman will become over grave and over decent and the Irishman over-impetuous. I like a Scotchman best because he is less of a bore—I like the Irishman best because he ought to be more comfortable.—The Scotchman has made up his Mind with himself in a sort of snail shell wisdom. The Irishman is full of strongheaded instinct. The Scotchman is farther in Humanity than the Irishman—there he will stick perhaps when the Irishman will be refined beyond him—for the former thinks he cannot be improved—the latter would grasp at it for ever, place but the good plain before him.

Goethe at the Little Court of Weimar

William Makepeace Thackeray to G. H. Lewes[1]

April 28, 1855.

Dear Lewes,

I wish I had more to tell you regarding Weimar and Goethe. Five-and-twenty years ago, at least a score of young English lads used to live at Weimar for study, for sport, or society. The Grand Duke and Duchess received us with the kindliest hospitality. The Court was splendid, but yet most pleasant and homely. We were invited in our turns to dinners, balls, and assemblies there. Such young

[1] This letter was included by George Henry Lewes in the *Life of Goethe.*

men as had a right appeared in uniforms, diplomatic and military. Some, I remember, invented gorgeous clothing: the kind old Hof Marschall of those days, M. de Spiegel (who had two of the most lovely daughters eyes ever looked on) being in nowise difficult as to the admission of these young Englanders. Of the winter nights we used to charter sedan chairs, in which we were carried through the snow to those pleasant Court entertainments. I, for my part, had the good luck to purchase Schiller's sword, which formed a part of my Court costume, and still hangs in my study, and puts me in mind of days of youth, the most kindly and delightful.

We knew the whole society of the little city, and but that the young ladies, one and all, spoke admirable English, we surely might have learned the very best German. The society met constantly. The ladies of the Court had their evenings.

The theatre was open twice or thrice in the week, where we assembled a "large family party." Goethe had retired from the direction, but the great tradition remained still. The theatre was admirably conducted, and besides the excellent Weimar company, famous actors and singers from various parts of Germany performed Gastrolle through the winter. In that winter I remember we had Ludwig Devrient in Shylock, Hamlet, Falstaff, and the Robbers; and the beautiful Schröder in Fidelio.

After three-and-twenty years' absence, I passed a couple of summer days in the well-remembered place, and was fortunate enough to find some of the friends of my youth. Madame de Goethe was there, and received me and my daughters with the kindness of old days. We drank tea in the open air, at the famous cottage in the park, which still belongs to the family, and had been so often inhabited by her illustrious family.

In 1831, though he had retired from the world, Goethe would nevertheless very kindly receive strangers. His daughter-in-law's tea-table was always spread for us. We passed hours after hours there, and night after night, with the pleasantest talk and music. We read over endless novels and poems in French, English, and German. My delight in those days was to make caricatures for children. I was touched to find that they were remembered, and some even kept until the present time; and very proud to be told, as a lad, that the great Goethe had looked at some of them.

He remained in his private apartments, where only a very few privileged persons were admitted; but he liked to know all that was happening, and interested himself about all strangers. Whenever a countenance struck his fancy, there was an artist settled in Weimar who made a portrait of it. Goethe had quite a gallery of heads, in black and white, taken by this painter. His house was all over pictures, drawings, casts, statues, and medals.

Of course I remember very well the perturbation of spirit with which, as a lad of nineteen, I received the long-expected intimation that the Herr Geheimerath would see me on such a morning. This notable audience took place in a little ante-chamber of his private apartments, covered all round with antique casts and bas-reliefs. He was habited in a long grey or drab redingot, with a white neck-cloth, and a red ribbon in his button-hole. He kept his hands behind his back, just as Rauch's statuette. His complexion was very bright, clear and rosy. His eyes extraordinarily dark, piercing and brilliant. I felt quite afraid before them, and recollect comparing them to the eyes of the hero of a certain romance called Melmoth the Wanderer, which used to alarm us boys thirty years ago; eyes of an individual who had made a bargain with a Certain Person, and at an extreme old age retained these eyes in all their

awful splendour. I fancied Goethe must have been still more handsome as an old man than even in the days of his youth. His voice was very rich, and sweet. He asked me questions about myself, which I answered as best I could. I recollect I was at first astonished, and then somewhat relieved, when I found he spoke French with not a good accent.

Vidi tantum. I saw him but three times.[1] Once walking in the garden of his house in the Frauenplatz; once going to step into his chariot on a sunshiny day, wearing a cap and cloak with a red collar. He was caressing at the time a beautiful little golden-haired grand-daughter, over whose sweet face the earth has long since closed, too.

Any of us who had books or magazines from England sent them to him, and he examined them eagerly. Fraser's Magazine had lately come out, and I remember he was interested in those admirable outline portraits which appeared for a while in its pages. But there was one, a very ghastly caricature of Mr. Rogers, which, as Madame de Goethe told me, he shut up and put away from him angrily. "They would make me look like that," he said, though in truth I could fancy nothing more serene, majestic, and healthy looking than the grand old Goethe.

Though his sun was setting, the sky roundabout was calm and bright, and that little Weimar illumined by it. In every one of those kind salons the talk was still of art and letters. The theatre, though possessing no very extraordinary actors, was still conducted with a noble intelligence and order. The actors read books, and were men of letters and gentlemen, holding a not unkindly relationship with the Adel. At Court the conversation was exceed-

[1] On Wednesday, October 20, 1830, he saw Wolfgang von Goethe for the first time. This was to Thackeray the most memorable day in his early life—one which he never forgot.

ingly friendly, simple, and polished. The Grand Duchess (the present Grand Duchess Dowager), a lady of very remarkable endowments, would kindly borrow our books from us, lend us her own, and graciously talk to us young men about our literary tastes and pursuits. In the respect paid by this Court to the Patriarch of letters, there was something ennobling, I think, alike to the subject and sovereign. With a five-and-twenty years' experience since those happy days of which I write, and an acquaintance with an immense variety of humankind, I think I have never seen a society more simple, charitable, courteous, gentlemanlike, than that of the dear little Saxon city where the good Schiller and the great Goethe lived and lie buried.

Very sincerely yours,

W. M. Thackeray.

One of His Characters in Real Life

Charles Dickens to Wilkie Collins

October 8, 1862.

I saw Poole (for my sins) last Saturday, and he *was* a sight. He had got out of bed to receive me (at 3 p.m.) and tried to look as if he had been up at Dawn—with a dirty and obviously warm impression of himself on the bedclothes. It was a tent bedstead with four wholly unaccounted for and bare poles, each with an immense spike on the top, like four Lightning conductors. He had a fortnight's grey beard, and had made a lot of the most extraordinary memoranda of questions to ask me—which he couldn't read—through an eyeglass which he couldn't hold. He was continually beset with a notion that his landlady was listening outside the door, and was continually getting up from a kind of ironing-board at which he sat, with the intention of darting at the door, but invariably missed his

aim, and brought himself up by the forehead against blind corners of the wall. He had a dressing-gown over his night-shirt, and wore his trousers where Blondin wears his Baskets. He said, with the greatest indignation, I might suppose what sort of "society" he could get out of his landlady, when he mentioned that she could say nothing, on being consulted by him touching the Poison-Case at the Old Bailey, but, "People didn't ought to poison people, sir; it's wrong."—Ever affec'ly, C. D.

A Portrait of George Sand

Elizabeth Barrett Browning to ——

Paris, *April* 7, 1852.

George Sand we came to know a great deal more of. I think Robert saw her six times. Once he met her near the Tuileries, offered her his arm, and walked with her the whole length of the gardens. She was not on that occasion looking as well as usual, being a little too much *endimanchée* in terrestrial lavenders and super-celestial blues—not, in fact, dressed with the remarkable taste which he had seen in her at other times. Her usual costume is both pretty and quiet, and the fashionable waistcoat and jacket (which are aspectable in all the *Ladies' Companions* of the day) make the only approach to masculine wearings to be observed in her.

She has great niccty and refinement in her personal ways, I think—and the cigarette is really a feminine weapon if properly understood.

Ah! but I didn't see her smoke. I was unfortunate. I could only go with Robert three times to her house, and once she was out. He was really very good and kind to let me go at all after he found the sort of society rampant around her. He didn't like it extremely, but being the

prince of husbands, he was lenient to my desires, and yielded the point. She seems to live in the abomination of desolation, as far as regards society-crowds of ill-bred men who adore her, *à genoux bas,* betwixt a puff of smoke and an ejection of saliva—society of the ragged red, diluted with the low theatrical. She herself so different, so apart, so alone in her melancholy disdain. I was deeply interested in that poor woman. I felt a profound compassion for her. I did not mind much even the Greek, in Greek costume, who *tutoyéd her,* and kissed her I believe, so Robert said—or the other vulgar man of the theatre, who went down on his knees and called her "*sublime.*" *Caprice d'amitie,* she said with her quiet gentle scorn. A noble woman under the mud, be certain. I would kneel down to her, too, if she would leave it all, throw it off, and be herself as God made her. But she would not care for my kneeling—she does not care for me. Perhaps she doesn't care much for anybody by this time, who knows? She wrote one or two or three kind notes to me, and promised to *venir m'embrasser* before she left Paris, but she did not come. We both tried hard to please her, and she told a friend of ours that she "liked us." Only we always felt that we couldn't penetrate—couldn't really touch her—it was all vain.

Extremely Washable Away

Thomas Carlyle to John Carlyle

Comely Bank: *November* 29, 1827.

The "Edinburgh Review" is out some time ago, and the "State of German Literature" has been received with considerable surprise and approbation by the Universe. Thus, for instance, De Quincey praises it in his "Saturday Post." Sir William Hamilton tells me it is "cap-tal," and Wilson informs John Gordon that it "has done me a deil

'o good." De Quincey was here last Wednesday and sate till midnight. He is one of the smallest men you ever in your life beheld; but with a most gentle and sensible face, only that the teeth are destroyed by opium, and the little bit of an underlip projects like a shelf. He speaks with a slow, sad, and soft voice in the politest manner I have almost ever witnessed, and with great gracefulness and sense, were it not that he seems decidedly given to prosing. Poor little fellow! It might soften a very hard heart to see him so courteous, yet so weak and poor; retiring *home* with his two children to a miserable lodging-house, and writing all day for the king of donkeys, the proprietor of the "Saturday Post." I lent him Jean Paul's autobiography, which I got lately from Hamburgh, and advised him to translate it for Blackwood, that so he might raise a few pounds, and fence off the Genius of Hunger yet a little while. Poor little De Quincey! He is an innocent man, and, as you said, extremely *washable* away.

The Noble Lady

Jane Welsh Carlyle to John Carlyle

Chelsea, *May* 9, 1854.

I saw the "Noble Lady"[1] that night, and a strange, tragic sight she was! Sitting all alone in a low-ceilinged, confined room, at the top of Procter's house; a French bed in a corner, some relics of the grand Bedford Square drawing-room (small pictures and the like) scattered about. Herself stately, artistic as ever; not a line of her figure, not a fold of her dress changed since we knew her first, twenty years ago and more! She made me sit on a low chair opposite to her (she had sent for me to come up), and began

[1] An old friend, Mrs. Montagu, whom Mrs. Carlyle had not seen for many years.

to speak of Edward Irving and long ago as if it were last year—last month! There was something quite overpowering in the whole thing: the Pagan grandeur of the old woman, retired from the world, awaiting death, as erect and unyielding as ever, contrasted so strangely with the mean bedroom at the top of the house, and the uproar of company going on below. And the past which she seemed to live and move in felt to gather round me too, till I fairly laid my head on her lap and burst into tears! She stroked my hair very gently and said, "I think, Jane, your manner never changes any more than your hair, which is still black, I see." "But you, too, are not changed," I said. "You know," she said, "when I was still a young woman, I dressed and felt like an old one, and so age has not told so much on me as on most others." When I had stayed with her an hour or so, she insisted on my going back to the company, and embraced me as she never did before. Her embrace always used to be so freezing to my youthful enthusiasm; but this time she held me strongly to her heart, and kissed my cheeks many times heartily, like a mother. I was near going off into crying again. I felt that she was taking eternal farewell of me in her own mind. But I don't mean it to be so: I will go again to see her very soon. The great gentleness was indeed the chief change in her—not a harsh word did she say about any one; and her voice, tho' clear and strong as of old, had a human modulation in it. You may fancy the humour in which I went back to the Party, which was then at a white heat of excitement—about nothing.

Thackeray for the Last Time

Thomas Carlyle to Lord Houghton

Poor Thackeray! I saw him not ten days ago. I was riding in the dusk, heavy of heart, along by the Serpentine

and Hyde Park, when some human brother from a chariot, with a young lady in it, threw me a shower of salutations. I looked up—it was Thackeray with his daughter: the last time I was to see him in this world. He had many fine qualities; no guile, or malice against any mortal; a big mass of a soul, but not strong in proportion; a beautiful vein of genius lay struggling about in him. Nobody of our day wrote, I should say, with such perfection of style. I predict of his books very much as you do. Poor Thackeray! Adieu ! Adieu !

Christ on the Cross

Edward FitzGerald to Bernard Barton

19 Charlotte Street,
Rathbone Place.
1844.

I heard a man preach at Bedford in a way that shook my soul. He described the crucifixion in a way that put the scene before his people—no fine words, and metaphors: but first one nail struck into one hand, and then into another, and one through both feet—the cross lifted up with God in man's image distended upon it. And the sneers of the priests below—"Look at that fellow there—look at him—he talked of saving others, etc." And then the sun veiled his face in Blood, etc. I certainly have heard oratory now—of the Lord Chatham kind, only Matthews has more faith in Christ than Pitt in his majority. I was almost as much taken aback as the poor folks all about me who sobbed: and I hate this beastly London more and more. It stinks all through of churchyards and fish shops. As to pictures—well, never mind them. Farewell.

The Dying Friend

Edward FitzGerald to W. B. Donne

Goldington, Bedford, *March* 26 [1859].

My dear Donne,

Your folks told you on what Errand I left your house so abruptly. I was not allowed to see W. B.[1] the day I came; nor yesterday till 3 p.m.; when, poor fellow, he tried to write a line to me, like a child's! and I went, and saw, no longer the gay Lad, nor the healthy Man, I had known: but a wreck of all that: a Face like Charles I (after decapitation almost) above the Clothes: and the poor shattered Body underneath lying as it had lain eight weeks; such a case as the Doctor says he had never known. Instead of the light utterance of other days too, came the slow painful syllables in a far lower Key; and when the old familiar words, "Old Fellow—Fitz"—etc., came forth, so spoken, I broke down too in spite of foregone Resolution.

They thought he'd die last Night: but this morning he is a little better: but no hope. He has spoken of me in the Night, and (if he wishes) I shall go again, provided his Wife and Doctor approve. But it agitates him: and Tears he could not wipe away came to his Eyes. The poor Wife bears up wonderfully.

A Sort of Crucified Expression

Edward FitzGerald to C. E. Norton

Little Grange, Woodbridge, *Jan.* 23, '76.

My dear Sir,

I suppose you may see one of the Carlyle Medallions: and you can judge better of the likeness than I, who have

[1] William Browne, who, in the early part of 1859, was horribly injured by his horse falling upon him. He lingered in great agony for several weeks.

not been to Chelsea, and hardly out of Suffolk, these fifteen years and more. I dare say it is like him: but his Profile is not his best phase. In two notes dictated by him since that Business he has not adverted to it: I think he must be a little ashamed of it, though it would not do to say so in return, I suppose. And yet I think he might have declined the Honours of a Life of "Heroism." I have no doubt he would have played a Brave Man's Part if called on; but, meanwhile, he has only sat pretty comfortably at Chelsea, scolding all the world for not being Heroic, and not always very precise in telling them how. He has, however, been so far heroic, as to be always independent, whether of Wealth, Rank, and Coteries of all sorts: nay, apt to fly in the face of some who courted him. I suppose he is changed, or subdued, at eighty: but up to the last ten years he seemed to me just the same as when I first knew him five and thirty years ago. What a Fortune he might have made by showing himself about as a Lecturer, as Thackeray and Dickens did; I don't mean they did it for vanity: but to make money: and that to spend generously. Carlyle did indeed lecture near forty years ago before he was a Lion to be shown, and when he had but few Readers. I heard his "Heroes," which now seems to me one of his best Books. He looked very handsome then, with his black hair, fine Eyes, and a sort of crucified Expression.

The Speddings: a Family Group

Edward FitzGerald to Mrs. Kemble

20 *March*, 1881.

My dear Lady,

I have let the Full Moon pass because I thought you had written to me so lately, and so kindly, about our lost

Spedding,[1] that I would not call on you so soon again. Of him I will say nothing except that his Death has made me recall very many passages in his Life in which I was partly concerned. In particular, staying at his Cumberland Home along with Tennyson in the May of 1835, *"Voilà bien longtemps de ça!"* His Father and Mother were both alive: he, a wise man, who mounted his Cob after Breakfast and was at his Farm till Dinner at two; then away again till Tea: after which he sat reading by a shaded lamp: saying very little, but always courteous and quite content with any company his Son might bring to the house, so long as they let him go his way: which indeed he would have gone whether they let him or no. But he had seen enough of Poets not to like them or their Trade: Shelley, for a time living among the Lakes: Coleridge at Southey's (whom perhaps he had a respect for—Southey I mean); and Wordsworth whom I do not think he valued. He was rather jealous of "Jem," who might have done available service in the world, he thought, giving himself up to such Dreamers; and sitting up with Tennyson conning over the Morte d'Arthur, Lord of Burleigh, and other things which helped to make up the two volumes of 1842. So I always associate that Arthur Idyll with Basanthwaite Lake, under Skiddaw. Mrs. Spedding was a sensible, motherly Lady, with whom I used to play Chess of a Night. And there was an old Friend of hers, Miss Bristowe, who always reminded me of Miss La Creevy, if you know of such a person in Nickleby.

At the end of May we went to lodge for a week at Windermere, where Wordsworth's new volume of Yarrow Revisited reached us. W. was then at his home: but

[1] James Spedding, the editor of Bacon's Works, was run over by a cab and died at St. George's Hospital on 9th March, 1881, eleven days previous to the writing of this letter.

Tennyson would not go to visit him: and of course I did not: nor even saw him.

You have, I suppose, the Carlyle Reminiscences: of which I will say nothing except that much as we outsiders gain by them, I think that, on the whole, they had better have been kept unpublished, for some while at least.

Shakespeare: an Imaginary Portrait

James Smetham to ——

2nd October, 1871.

Shakespeare stands the wonder of all time. Now why? He had small Latin and less Greek. Ben Jonson had large Latin and much Greek; but who really cares for Ben Jonson except literary fogies who pity your ignorance if you say so? It is just *this:* Shakespeare was all *alive,* a nimble spirit like the lightning, who could put "a girdle round the earth in forty minutes," and not feel that he had done anything particular, but at the age of 46 to go to Stratford and buy a piece of property, and loll over the gates, talking to farmers and graziers, and Bill the butcher's boy, and the Squire at the Hall: at home with the Universe. His *sort* of carelessness in his plays reveals the man. When his blood is up he makes heaven and earth bend and deliver up what he wants *on the instant,* and goes crashing through the forest of words like a thunderbolt, crushing them out of shape if they don't fit in, melting moods and tenses, and leaving people to gape at the transformation. If the grammarians object, he goes on like the hero of Jabberwocky,

> O frubjus day! Calloo, Callay!
> He chortles in his joy!

He's not going to stop and put their heads on straight. They should have kept out of his way.

The truth is he did not conceive things in words at all. He was a Seer. He first saw the thing or the character, as if he had got out of himself into it, and then with the "noble mould of Marcius" he just drove the words together with a voice of thunder.

> "The poet's eye in a fine phrensy rolling
> Did glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven."

Do you think he was a talker; talking people down with his small Latin? He talked, yes; but so as to make everybody "unbolt to him," and he had them ere they were aware by the gift of sympathy. He had what is reported of Mirabeau, *le don terrible de la familiarité,* and caught them without guile. Sure am I of this, that Shakespeare was like *putty* to everybody, and everything, the willing slave, pulled out, patted down, squeezed anyhow, clay to every potter. But he knew by the plastic hand what the nature of the moulder was. Your weak-strong man *butts* and asserts himself, and gets to know nothing and nobody.

IX

Journal-Letters

Paris when Napoleon was in exile.

Benjamin Robert Haydon (1786-1846)

The Vale of Soul-making.

John Keats (1795-1821)

A pen-sketch of Paris.

William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863)

"Sentimental Tommy."

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894)

Paris when Napoleon was in Exile

Benjamin Robert Haydon to Leigh Hunt

Paris, 20th *June,* 1814.

My dear Hunt,

I have got so much to tell you that I do not know how I can squeeze it all into one sheet; however, I will do my best. I have been to Versailles, Rambouillet, Malmaison, and St. Cloud. I have been to the Catacombs, the Jardin des Plantes, Musée Française, and through all the gaming-houses of the Palais Royal—such scenes as you, in your antediluvian innocence of mind in England, can never conceive, and God grant you never may! Fancy whole rooms full of gamblers; in each room a table, and each table for a different game. You can gamble for Napoleons down to ten sous; each table was full, from the Napoleon downwards. All eager, silent, anxious; intensely alive to the slightest motion or the slightest noise. Young, interesting women were wandering about losing at one table, winning at another; old harassed villains, with the most polished manners; and worn-out, ugly, dirty, dissipated dowagers, smothered in ragged lace, and buried beneath huge bonnets. The expression of disappointment, of agonized disappointment; of piercing, acute abstraction; of cold, dreaming vexation; of chuckling, half-suppressed triumph, were so apparent that no man could mistake what was passing within; and as your eye wandered round, your heart sank as you recognized the thoughts of each. They all looked jaded, fagged creatures, whose whole lives had been passed in the perpetual struggles of opposite passions.

There was about them a dissipated neglect which marked them. The only sound which disturbed the dreadful silence of the scene was the tinkling of the money, or the smart crack of the stick as the winner jerked it towards his heap.

June 22nd. Versailles at present exhibits a most melancholy appearance of ruined splendor. Painted ceilings faded! Crimson tapestry torn, and golden fringes brown with age! During the revolution a wing was occupied by the soldiers, and it bears miserable proof of their cureless inclination to destroy.

The Opera House is vast, ruinous, and dark. The Gardens formal, to my feeling. How any one can look at the delicious gardens of Petit Trianon, à l'Anglaise, and not be converted, is to me extraordinary. Petit Trianon was fitted up most luxuriously for Maria Louisa, but she never resided there. Both Bonaparte and the Empress remained at Grand Trianon. The servants who showed us Grand Trianon said that they began to feel the blessings of repose; during Napoleon's reign they were never suffered to be still an instant. As Wilkie was fatigued, I set off by myself the next morning to Rambouillet, the hunting seat of the kings of France. I was exceedingly affected in going through the apartments of Maria Louisa. Her toilet-table was precisely as she had left it the last morning she dressed her hair; her bed-room very elegant, and by the bed stood a pianoforte, which I touched. Her little *salon de repos* was close to her dining-room, and it appeared snug and refined in its luxury. The old man who showed me the rooms said that the Empress, on her flight here from Paris, walked the last stage with her child. For the last six days she scarcely ate anything, wandered about the grounds in melancholy silence. When her departure was fixed she was exceeding afflicted. The old man said

she was very amiable and of sweet disposition. I passed on to Bonaparte's rooms, which were also very luxuriously fitted up. His *salle-à-manger* was elegant for a hunting-seat, though it did not approach that at Grand Trianon. From his drawing-room I entered a twilight room of small dimensions. This was Napoleon's private secret closet for repose and reflection, where he used to retire when exhausted, and to which no one was admitted but the Empress. The little room seemed a complete illustration of the mind and feelings of this extraordinary man. Opposite the window was an elegant arch, under which stood a most luxurious satin couch, with the softest pillows. Round the arch were painted in gold the names Austerlitz, Marengo, Friedland, etc., and down the sides the arms of all the states tributary to France, with groups of warlike implements; and "N. N. N." with the head laurel crowned. When Napoleon lay in indolent seclusion on this luxurious couch, he was reminded of conquered monarchs and his greatest battles. I was exceedingly interested, and felt as though admitted to the centre of his soul, on a spot where his demon spirit had yet an influence. He could never have risen from such a couch but with a mind filled with vast designs, fevered blood, and his brain in a blaze. Why, I thought, might he not have resolved in this tremendous silence on the murder of D'Enghien, on the gigantic enterprise against Russia? I entered into the secret feelings of one who was first the admiration, then the terror, and latterly the detestation of the world. I enjoyed the full luxury of contemplation, and my conductor did not interrupt me till I recovered my perceptions. The English garden was very fine, and the canal *superbe et magnifique,* as the old man said; on it was a large elegant boat, in which Bonaparte and the Empress used to sail. In a room at the top of the old tower Francis I died. I

returned to Versailles, and set off next morning for Malmaison and St. Cloud. Poor Josephine was dead, so we could only see the gallery, in which were some extraordinary pictures and statues. St. Cloud was shut up. At every step in France you meet with traces of the gigantic wars that have desolated Europe. There is scarcely a waiter in a coffee-house, or a driver of a *fiacre* that has not served as a soldier, been through a campaign, or been wounded in a battle. On my way to Rambouillet I took up a fine youth, only nineteen, delicate and slender. He had been wounded and taken by the Russians, stripped and turned off to find his way, naked and bleeding. He said he trembled, and could hardly hold his musket, seeing all his companions fall around him. If it had not been for Mme. la Duchesse de la Moskowa (Ney's wife) he must have died. She got accommodation for him and several other wounded men, obtained his discharge when better, and gave him money to take him home. He left Chartres with sixty youths, all of whom were killed but himself. "If Bonaparte had remained he would have killed all mankind, and then made war upon animals," said the boy. Coming back I met a dragoon from Spain. The coachman of the *voiture* had served with Moreau, and lost three fingers. The contradictory state of mind of the people is strange. They denounce Bonaparte, yet glory in his victories. They tell you of his genius and execrate his government in the same breath. Talking of him as a conqueror they fire with enthusiasm; as a monarch they anathematize him. I had almost forgotten to mention the Jardin des Plantes, an immense piece of ground devoted to flowers of all countries; and spacious enclosures where beasts, birds, and fish from every clime are kept as nearly as possible in their native manner. There is something of Roman magnificence in all this, and also of

Roman callousness to human suffering. Last year a bear devoured one of the keepers, an old soldier. In England the bear would have been shot, and subscriptions raised for the soldier's widow and children. Here they called the bear by the man's name, and made a caricature of the scene. I have been told of it repeatedly as *a good joke.* There is an immense museum of Natural History, in which the skeleton of every animal is kept. I have also visited Voltaire's house at Ferney; in his sitting-room were plans of the Alps and Lake Geneva, and it was full of portraits, among them Milton and Franklin. On the other side hung his washerwoman and chimney sweeper, with Pope Clementine between them! The ballet at the French Opera is much superior to ours, wonderfully fine and graceful; but the singing miserable. The Italian Opera is good; they do not suffer dancing there. I have seen Denon, and found him a most delightful man. I have been to Vincennes, where D'Enghien was shot, and have investigated every atom of the field of battle. I am going to Fontainebleau before leaving Paris, which we do on Saturday week, and hope to see your gracious Majesty about the 5th. Your "Masque," I expect, is finished and out, and succeeded, I am sure. I have met with "Paradis Perdu"—one line will be enough for you. *Hamlet* I have seen—murder! Two fine editions of Dante and Ariosto I have bought for you with Dante's private Meditations. If there be no duty, they will all be only £2 12s—old plates, curious and interesting. Remember me kindly to your brother John, to your Mrs. Hunt, and his Mrs. Hunt, also your brother Robert; to Scott, Barnes, and all the heroes. I am convinced, my dear Hunt, that you might make a fine article on Bonaparte's *secret closet,* and all that has been thought of there. *There* he revelled on dreams of dominion and conquest, of murder and blood;

and when his mind and imagination were fired with a sort of gory, gleaming splendour, perhaps sent for the Empress.

Truly and affectionately yours,
B. R. Haydon.

The Vale of Soul-Making

John Keats to George and Georgiana Keats[1]

[Wentworth Place]

March 12, 1819, *Friday.*—The candles are burnt down and I am using the wax taper—which has a long snuff on it—the fire is at its last click—I am sitting with my back to it with one foot rather askew upon the rug and the other with the heel a little elevated from the carpet—I am writing this on the Maid's tragedy which I have read since tea with Great pleasure. Besides this volume of Beaumont and Fletcher—there are on the table two volumes of Chaucer and a new work of Tom Moore's called "Tom Cribb's Memorial to Congress"—nothing in it. These are trifles but I require nothing so much of you but that you will give me a like description of yourselves, however it may be when you are writing to me. Could I see the same thing done of any great Man long since dead it would be a great delight: As to know in what position Shakespeare sat when he began "To be or not to be"—such

[1] James Smetham comments thus on Keats as a letter-writer:—"Keats seemed to have a penetrating imagination which saw truth by instinct, but he had no *reasoning* in him, as he himself says. His letters are like the flight of small hedge-birds: hop, hop, hop—twitter, twitter, and every now and then a flight into a little oak-tree. They are tender-legged, too, like linnets, not having much to stand on. You can scarcely remember a word of them, and yet you cannot help being pleased with them." A belittling verdict, which is, nevertheless, as regards some of his lighter letters, happy and true.

things become interesting from distance of time or place. I hope you are both now in that sweet sleep which no two beings deserve more than you do—I must fancy you so—and please myself in the fancy of speaking a prayer and a blessing over you and your lives—God bless you—I whisper good night in your ears and you will dream of me.

. . . . . .

Friday, 19th March [1819].—This morning I have been reading "The False One." Shameful to say, I was in bed at ten—I mean this morning. The Blackwood Reviewers have committed themselves to a scandalous heresy—they have been putting up Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, against Burns: the senseless villains! The Scotch cannot manage themselves at all, they want imagination, and that is why they are so fond of Hogg, who has so little of it. This morning I am in a sort of temper, indolent and supremely careless. I long after a stanza or two of Thomson's Castle of Indolence—my passions are all asleep, from my having slumbered till nearly eleven, and weakened the animal fibre all over me, to a delightful sensation, about three degrees on this side of faintness. If I had teeth of pearl and the breath of lilies I should call it languor, but as I am * I must call it laziness. In this state of effeminacy the fibres of the brain are relaxed in common with the rest of the body, and to such a happy degree that pleasure has no show of enticement and pain no unbearable power. Neither Poetry, nor Ambition, nor Love have any alertness of countenance as they pass by me; they seem rather like figures on a Greek vase—a Man and two women whom no one but myself could distinguish in their disguisement. This is the only happiness, and is a rare instance of the advantage of the body overpowering the Mind. I have this moment received a note from Haslam, in which he

* Especially as I have a black eye.

expects the death of his Father, who has been for some time in a state of insensibility; his mother bears up, he says, very well—I shall go to town to-morrow to see him. This is the world—thus we cannot expect to give away many hours to pleasure. Circumstances are like Clouds continually gathering and bursting. While we are laughing, the seed of some trouble is put into the wide arable land of events—while we are laughing it sprouts, it grows, and suddenly bears a poison fruit which we must pluck. Even so we have leisure to reason on the misfortunes of our friends; our own touch us too nearly for words. Very few men have ever arrived at a complete disinterestedness of Mind: very few have been influenced by a pure desire of the benefit of others,—in the greater part of the Benefactors of Humanity some meretricious motive has sullied their greatness—some melodramatic scenery has fascinated them. From the manner in which I feel Haslam's misfortune I perceive how far I am from any humble standard of disinterestedness. Yet this feeling ought to be carried to its highest pitch, as there is no fear of its ever injuring society—which it would do, I fear, pushed to an extremity. For in wild nature the Hawk would lose his Breakfast of Robins and the Robin his of Worms—the Lion must starve as well as the Swallow. The greater part of Men make their way with the same instinctiveness, the same unwandering eye from their purposes, the same animal eagerness as the Hawk. The Hawk wants a Mate, so does the Man—look at them both, they set about it and procure one in the same manner. They want both a nest and they both set about one in the same manner—they get their food in the same manner. The noble animal Man for his amusement smokes his pipe—the Hawk balances about the clouds—that is the only difference of their leisures. This it is that makes the Amusement of Life—to a speculative

Mind—I go among the Fields and catch a glimpse of a Stoat or a fieldmouse peeping out of the withered grass—the creature hath a purpose, and its eyes are bright with it. I go amongst the buildings of a city and I see a man hurrying along—to what? the creature hath a purpose and his eyes are bright with it. But then, as Wordsworth says, "we have all one human heart——" There is an electric fire in human nature tending to purify—so that among these human creatures there is continually some birth of new heroism. The pity is, that we must wonder at it, as we should at finding a pearl in rubbish. I have no doubt that thousands of people never heard of have had hearts completely disinterested: I can remember but two—Socrates and Jesus—Their histories evince it. What I heard a little time ago, Taylor observe with respect to Socrates, may be said of Jesus—That he was so great a man that though he transmitted no writing of his own to posterity, we have his Mind and his sayings and his greatness handed to us by others. It is to be lamented that the history of the latter was written and revised by Men interested in the pious frauds of Religion. Yet through all this I see his splendour. Even here, though I myself am pursuing the same instinctive course as the veriest human animal you can think of, I am, however young, writing at random, straining at particles of light in the midst of a great darkness, without knowing the bearing of any one assertion, of any one opinion. Yet may I not in this be free from sin? May there not be superior beings, amused with any graceful, though instinctive, attitude my mind may fall into as I am entertained with the alertness of the Stoat or the anxiety of a Deer? Though a quarrel in the Streets is a thing to be hated, the energies displayed in it are fine; the commonest Man shows a grace in his quarrel. By a superior Being our reasonings may take the same tone—

though erroneous they may be fine. This is the very thing in which consists Poetry, and if so it is not so fine a thing as philosophy—for the same reason that an eagle is not so fine a thing as a truth. Give me this credit—Do you not think I strive—to know myself? Give me this credit, and you will not think that on my account I repeat Milton's lines—

> "How charming is divine Philosophy—
> Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
> But musical as is Apollo's lute"—

No—no for myself—feeling grateful as I do to have got into a state of mind to relish them properly. Nothing ever becomes real till it is experienced—even a Proverb is no proverb to you till your Life has illustrated it. I am ever afraid that your anxiety for me will lead you to fear for the violence of my temperament continually smothered down: for that reason I did not intend to have sent you the following sonnet—but look over the two last pages and ask yourselves whether I have not that in me which will bear the buffets of the world. It will be the best comment on my sonnet; it will show you that it was written with no Agony but that of ignorance; with no thirst of anything but Knowledge when pushed to the point, though the first steps to it were through my human passions—they went away and I wrote with my Mind—and perhaps I must confess a little bit of my heart—

Why did I laugh to-night? No voice will tell:
No God, no Demon of severe response
Deigns to reply from heaven or from Hell.—
Then to my human heart I turn at once—
Heart! thou and I are here sad and alone;
Say, wherefore did I laugh? O mortal pain!

O Darkness! Darkness! ever must I moan
To question Heaven and Hell and Heart in vain!
Why did I laugh? I know this being's lease
My fancy to its utmost blisses spreads:
Yet could I on this very midnight cease
And the world's gaudy ensigns see in shreds.
Verse, fame and Beauty are intense indeed
But Death intenser—Death is Life's high meed.

I went to bed and enjoyed uninterrupted sleep. Sane I went to bed and sane I arose. . . .

I have been reading lately two very different books, Robertson's America and Voltaire's Siècle de Louis XIV. It is like walking arm and arm between Pizarro and the great-little Monarch. In how lamentable a case do we see the great body of the people in both instances; in the first when Men might seem to inherit quiet of Mind from unsophisticated senses; from uncontamination of civilization and especially from their being as it were estranged from the mutual helps of Society and its mutual injuries —and thereby more immediately under the Protection of Providence—even there they had mortal pains to bear as bad, or even worse than Bailiffs, Debts and Poverties of civilized Life. The whole appears to resolve into this—that Man is originally a poor forked creature subject to the same mischances as the beasts of the forest, destined to hardships and disquietude of some kind or other. If he improves by degrees his bodily accommodations and comforts—at each stage, at each ascent there are waiting for him a fresh set of annoyances—he is mortal and there is still a heaven with its Stars above his head. The most interesting question that can come before us is, How far by the persevering endeavours of a seldom appearing Socrates Mankind may be made happy—I can imagine

such happiness carried to an extreme—but what must it end in?—Death—and who could in such a case bear with death? The whole troubles of life which are now frittered away in a series of years, would the[n] be accumulated for the last days of a being who instead of hailing its approach would leave this world as Eve left Paradise. But in truth I do not at all believe in this sort of perfectibility—the nature of the world will not admit of it—the inhabitants of the world will correspond to itself. Let the fish Philosophise the ice away from the Rivers in winter time and they shall be at continual play in the tepid delight of summer. Look at the Poles and at the Sands of Africa, whirlpools and volcanoes. Let men exterminate them and I will say that they may arrive at earthly Happiness. The point at which Man may arrive is as far as the parallel state in inanimate nature and no further. For instance suppose a rose to have sensation, it blooms on a beautiful morning, it enjoys itself, but then comes a cold wind, a hot sun—it cannot escape it, it cannot destroy its annoyances—they are as native to the world as itself—no more can man be happy in spite, the worldly elements will prey upon his nature. The common cognomen of this world among the misguided and superstitious is "a vale of tears" from which we are to be redeemed by a certain arbitrary interposition of God and taken to Heaven. What a little circumscribed straightened [*sic*] notion! Call the world if you please "The vale of Soul-making." Then you will find out the use of the world (I am speaking now in the highest terms for human nature admitting it to be immortal which I will here take for granted for the purpose of showing a thought which has struck me concerning it) I say "*Soul-making*"—Soul as distinguished from an Intelligence. There may be intelligences or sparks of the divinity in millions—but they are not Souls till they ac-

quire identities, till each one is personally itself. Intelligences are atoms of perception—they know and they see and they are pure, in short they are God.—How then are Souls to be made? How then are these sparks which are God to have identity given them—so as ever to possess a bliss peculiar to each one's individual existence? How but by the medium of a world like this? This point I sincerely wish to consider because I think it a grander system of salvation than the christian religion—or rather it is a system of Spirit creation. This is effected by three grand materials acting the one upon the other for a series of years. These three materials are the *Intelligence*—the *human heart* (as distinguished from intelligence or Mind) and the *World* or *Elemental space* suited for the proper action of *Mind and Heart* on each other for the purpose of forming the *Soul* or *Intelligence destined to possess the sense of Identity.* I can scarcely express what I but dimly perceive—and yet I think I perceive it—that you may judge the more clearly I will put it in the most homely form possible. I will call the *world* a School instituted for the purpose of teaching little children to read—I will call the *human heart* the *horn Book* read in that School—and I will call the *Child able to read, the Soul* made from that *School* and its *horn book.* Do you not see how necessary a World of Pains and troubles is to school an Intelligence and make it a Soul? A Place where the heart must feel and suffer in a thousand diverse ways. Not merely is the Heart a Hornbook, It is the Mind's Bible, it is the Mind's experience, it is the text from which the Mind or Intelligence sucks its identity. As various as the Lives of Men are—so various become their Souls, and thus does God make individual beings, Souls, Identical Souls of the sparks of his own essence. This appears to me a faint sketch of a system of Salvation which does not offend our

reason and humanity—I am convinced that many difficulties which christians labour under would vanish before it—there is one which even now strikes me—the salvation of Children. In them the spark or intelligence returns to God without any identity—it having had no time to learn of and be altered by the heart—or seat of the human Passions. It is pretty generally suspected that the christian scheme has been copied from the ancient Persian and Greek Philosophers. Why may they not have made this simple thing even more simple for common apprehension by introducing Mediators and Personages in the same manner as in the heathen mythology abstractions are personified? Seriously I think it probable that this system of Soul-making may have been the Parent of all the more palpable and personal schemes of Redemption among the Zoroastrians, the Christians and the Hindoos. For as one part of the human species must have their carved Jupiter; so another part must have the palpable and named Mediator and Saviour, their Christ, their Oromanes and their Vishnu. If what I have said should not be plain enough, as I fear it may not be, I will put you in the place where I began in this series of thoughts—I mean I began by seeing how man was formed by circumstances—and what are circumstances but touchstones of his heart? and what are touchstones but provings of his heart, but fortifiers or alterers of his nature? and what is his altered nature but his Soul?—and what was his Soul before it came into the world and had these provings and alterations and perfectionings?—An intelligence without Identity—and how is this Identity to be made? Through the medium of the Heart? and how is the heart to become this Medium but in a world of Circumstances? There now I think what with Poetry and Theology you may thank your stars that my pen is not very long-winded.

A Pen-Sketch of Paris

William Makepeace Thackeray to Mrs. Brookfield

Paris, 1850.

My dear Lady,

Do you see how mad everybody is in the world? or is it not my own insanity? Yesterday when it became time to shut up my letter, I was going to tell you about my elders, who have got hold of a mad old Indian woman, who calls herself Aline Gultave d'origine Mogole, who is stark staring mad, and sees visions, works miracles, *que sais-je?* The old fool is mad of sheer vanity, and yet fool as she is, my people actually believe in her, and I believe the old gentleman goes to her every day. To-day I went to see D'Orsay, who has made a bust of Lamartine, who, too, is mad with vanity. He has written some verses on his bust, and asks, Who is this? Is it a warrior? Is it a hero? Is it a priest? Is it a sage? Is it a tribune of the people? Is it an Adonis? meaning that he is all these things,—verses so fatuous and crazy I never saw. Well, D'Orsay says they are the finest verses that ever were written, and imparts to me a translation which Miss Power has made of them; and D'Orsay believes, in his mad rubbish of a statue, which he didn't make; believes in it in the mad way that madmen do,—that it is divine, and that he made it; only as you look in his eyes, you see that he doesn't quite believe, and when pressed hesitates, and turns away with a howl of rage. D'Orsay has fitted himself up a charming *atelier* with arms and trophies, pictures and looking-glasses, the tomb of Blessington, the sword and star of Napoleon, and a crucifix over his bed; and here he dwells without any doubts or remorses, admiring himself in the most horrible pictures which he has painted, and the

statues which he gets done for him. I had been at work till two, all day before going to see him; and thence went to Lady Normanby, who was very pleasant and talkative; and then tramping upon a half dozen of visits of duty. I had refused proffered banquets in order to dine at home, but when I got home at the dinner hour, everybody was away, the *bonne* was ill and obliged to go to the country, and parents and children were away to dine with a Mrs. ———, a good woman who writes books, keeps a select boarding-house for young ladies who wish to see Parisian society, and whom I like, but cannot bear, because she has the organ of admiration too strongly. Papa was king, mamma was queen, in this company, I a sort of foreign emperor with the princesses my daughters. By Jove, it was intolerably painful; and I must go to her soirée to-morrow night too, and drag about in this confounded little Pedlington. Yesterday night,—I am afraid it was the first day of the week,—I dined with Morton, and met no less than four tables of English I knew, and went to the play. There was a little girl acting, who made one's heart ache;—the joke of the piece is, the child, who looks about three, is taken by the servants to a casino, is carried off for an hour by some dragoons, and comes back, having learned to smoke, to dance slang dances, and sing slang songs. Poor little rogue, she sung one of her songs, from an actor's arms; a wicked song, in a sweet little innocent voice. She will be bought and sold within three years from this time, and won't be playing at wickedness any more. I shall shut my desk and say God bless all the little girls that you and I love, and their parents. God bless you, dear lady.

I have got a very amusing book, the *Tatler* newspaper of 1709; and that shall be my soporific I hope. I have been advancing in Blue Beard, but must give it up, it is too

dreadfully cynical and wicked. It is in blank verse, and all a diabolical sneer. Depend upon it, Helps is right.

Wednesday. If I didn't write yesterday it was because I was wickedly employed. I was gambling until two o'clock this morning, playing a game called *lansquenet* which is very good gambling; and I left off, as I had begun, very thankful not to carry away any body's money or leave behind any of my own; but it was curious to watch the tempers of the various players, the meanness of one, the flurry and excitement of another, the difference of the same man winning and losing; all which I got, besides a good dinner and a headache this morning. Annie and Minnie and my mother, came to see me this morning. I don't think they will be so very eager for Paris after three weeks here; the simple habits of our old people will hardly suit the little women. Even in my absence in America, I don't quite like leaving them altogether here; I wonder if an amiable family, as is very kind to me, will give them hospitality for a month? I was writing Blue Beard all day; very sardonic and amusing to do, but I doubt whether it will be pleasant to read or hear, or even whether it is right to go on with this wicked vein; and also, I must tell you that a story is biling up in my interior, in which there shall appear some very good, lofty, and generous people; perhaps a story without any villains in it would be good, wouldn't it?

Thursday. Thanks for your letter, madame. If I tell you my plans and my small gossip I don't bore you, do I? You listen to them so kindly at home, that I've got the habit, you see. Why don't you write a little handwriting and send me yours? This place begins to be as bad as London in the season; there are dinners and routs for every day and night. Last night I went to dine at home, with *bouilli bœuf* and *ordinaire,* and bad *ordinaire* too, but the

dinner was just as good as a better one, and afterwards I went with my Mother to a soirée, where I had to face fifty people of whom I didn't know one; and being there, was introduced to other soirée givers, be hanged to them. And there I left my ma, and went off to Madame Gudin's the painter's wife, where really there was a beautiful ball: and all the world, all the English world that is; and to-night it is the President's ball, if you please, and to-morrow, and the next day, and the next, more gaieties. It was queer to see poor old Castlereagh in a dark room, keeping aloof from the dancing and the gaiety, and having his thoughts fixed on kingdom come, and Bennett confessor and martyr; while Lady Castlereagh, who led him into his devotional state, was enjoying the music and gay company, as cheerfully as the most mundane person present. The French people all talk to me about *Ponche,* when I am introduced to them, which wounds my vanity, which is wholesome, very likely. Among the notabilities was Vicomte D'Arlincourt, a mad old romance writer, on whom I amused myself by pouring the most tremendous compliments I could invent. He said, *j'ai vu l'Écosse; mais Valter Scott n'y était plus, helas!* I said, *vous y étiez, Vicomte, c'était bien assez d'un*—on which the old boy said I possessed French admirably, and knew to speak the prettiest things in the prettiest manner. I wish you could see him, I wish you could see the world here. I wish you and Mr. were coming to the play with me tonight; to a regular melodrama, far away on the Boulevard, and a quiet snug little dinner *au Banquet d'Anacréon.* The *Banquet d'Anacréon* is a dingy little restaurant on the boulevard where all the plays are acted, and they tell great things of a piece called *Paillasse* in which Le Maître performs; *nous verrons,* Madame, *nous verrons.* But with all this racket and gaiety, do you understand that a gentleman feels very

lonely? I swear I had sooner have a pipe and a gin and water soirée with somebody, than the best President's *orgeat*. I go to my cousins for half an hour almost every day; you'd like them better than poor Mary whom you won't be able to stand, at least if she talk to you about her bodily state as she talks to me. What else shall I say in this stupid letter? I've not seen any children as pretty as Magdalene, that's all. I have told Annie to write to you and I am glad Mrs. Fan is going to stay; and I hear that several papers have reproduced the thunder and small beer articles; and I thank you for your letter; and pray the best prayers I am worth for you, and your husband, and child, my dear lady. W. M. T.

"Sentimental Tommy"

Robert Louis Stevenson to J. M. Barrie

This journal-letter to Mr. Barrie covers a period of a month. In the interval between two of its parts (August 6th and August 12th) the news of Mr. Barrie's engagement and marriage, which took place soon after his recovery from a dangerous illness, had reached Samoa.

Vailima, *July* 13, 1894.

My dear Barrie,—This is the last effort of an ulcerated conscience. I have been so long owing you a letter, I have heard so much of you, fresh from the press, from my mother and Graham Balfour, that I have to write a letter no later than to-day, or perish in my shame. But the deuce of it is, my dear fellow, that you write such a very good letter that I am ashamed to exhibit myself before my junior (which you are, after all) in the light of the dreary idiot I feel. Understand that there will be nothing funny in the following pages. If I can manage to be rationally coherent, I shall be more than satisfied.

In the first place, I have had the extreme satisfaction to be shown that photograph of your mother. It bears evident traces of the hand of an amateur. How is it that amateurs invariably take better photographs than professionals? I must qualify invariably. My own negatives have always represented a province of chaos and old night in which you might dimly perceive fleecy spots of twilight, representing nothing; so that, if I am right in supposing the portrait of your mother to be yours, I must salute you as my superior. Is that your mother's breakfast? Or is it only afternoon tea? If the first, do let me recommend to Mrs. Barrie to add an egg to her ordinary. Which, if you please, I will ask her to eat to the honour of her son, and I am sure she will live much longer for it, to enjoy his fresh successes. I never in my life saw anything more deliciously characteristic. I declare I can hear her speak. I wonder my mother could resist the temptation of your proposed visit to Kirriemuir, which it was like your kindness to propose. By the way, I was twice in Kirriemuir, I believe in the year '71, when I was going on a visit to Glenogil. It was Kirriemuir, was it not? I have a distinct recollection of an inn at the end—I think the upper end—of an irregular open place or square, in which I always see your characters evolve. But, indeed, I did not pay much attention; being all bent upon my visit to a shooting-box, where I should fish a real trout-stream, and I believe preserved. I did, too, and it was a charming stream, clear as crystal, without a trace of peat—a strange thing in Scotland—and alive with trout; the name of it I cannot remember, it was something like the Queen's River, and in some hazy way connected with memories of Mary Queen of Scots. It formed an epoch in my life, being the end of all my trout-fishing. I had always been accustomed to pause and very laboriously to kill every fish as I

took it. But in the Queen's River I took so good a basket that I forgot these niceties; and when I sat down, in a hard rain shower, under a bank, to take my sandwiches and sherry, lo! and behold, there was the basketful of trouts still kicking in their agony. I had a very unpleasant conversation with my conscience. All that afternoon I persevered in fishing, brought home my basket in triumph, and sometime that night, "in the wee sma' hours ayont the twal," I finally forswore the gentle craft of fishing. I dare say your local knowledge may identify this historic river; I wish it could go farther and identify also that particular Free kirk in which I sat and groaned on Sunday. While my hand is in I must tell you a story. At that antique epoch you must not fall into the vulgar error that I was myself ancient. I was, on the contrary, very young, very green, and (what you will appreciate, Mr. Barrie) very shy. There came one day to lunch at the house two very formidable old ladies—or one very formidable, and the other what you please—answering to the honoured and historic name of the Miss C—— A——'s of Bulnamoon. At table I was exceedingly funny, and entertained the company with tales of geese and bubbly-jocks. I was great in the expression of my terror for these bipeds, and suddenly this horrid, severe, and eminently matronly old lady put up a pair of gold eye-glasses, looked at me awhile in silence, and pronounced in a clangorous voice her verdict. "You give me very much the effect of a coward, Mr. Stevenson!" I had very nearly left two vices behind me at Glenogil—fishing and jesting at table. And of one thing you may be very sure, my lips were no more opened at that meal.

July 29th.

No, Barrie, 'tis in vain they try to alarm me with their bulletins. No doubt, you're ill, and unco ill, I believe;

but I have been so often in the same case that I know pleurisy and pneumonia are in vain against Scotsmen who can write. (I once could.) You cannot imagine probably how near me this common calamity brings you. *Ce que j'ai toussé dans ma vie!* How often and how long have I been on the rack at night and learned to appreciate that noble passage in the Psalms when somebody or other is said to be more set on something than they "who dig for hid treasures—yea, than those who long for the morning"—for all the world, as you have been racked and you have longed. Keep your heart up, and you'll do. Tell that to your mother, if you are still in any danger or suffering. And by the way, if you are at all like me—and I tell myself you are very like me—be sure there is only one thing good for you, and that is the sea in hot climates. Mount, sir, into "a little frigot" of 5,000 tons or so, and steer peremptorily for the tropics; and what if the ancient mariner, who guides your frigot, should startle the silence of the ocean with the cry of land ho!—say, when the day is dawning—and you should see the turquoise mountain-tops of Upolu coming hand over fist above the horizon? Mr. Barrie, sir, 'tis then there would be larks! And though I cannot be certain that our climate would suit you (for it does not suit some), I am sure as death the voyage would do you good—would do you *Best*—and if Samoa didn't do, you needn't stay beyond the month, and I should have had another pleasure in my life, which is a serious consideration for me. I take this as the hand of the Lord preparing your way to Vailima—in the desert, certainly—in the desert of Cough and by the ghoul-haunted woodland of Fever—but whither that way points there can be no question—and there will be a meeting of the twa Hoasting Scots Makers in spite of fate, fortune, and the Devil. *Absit omen.*

My dear Barrie, I am a little in the dark about this new work of yours:[1] what is to become of me afterwards? You say carefully—methought anxiously—that I was no longer me when I grew up? I cannot bear this suspense: what is it? It's no forgery? And AM I HANGIT? These are the elements of a very pretty lawsuit which you had better come to Samoa to compromise. I am enjoying a great pleasure that I had long looked forward to, reading Orne's "History of Indostan"; I had been looking out for it everywhere; but at last, in four volumes, large quarto, beautiful type and page, and with a delectable set of maps and plans, and all the names of the places wrongly spelled —it came to Samoa, little Barrie. I tell you frankly, you had better come soon. I am sair failed a'ready; and what I may be if you continue to dally, I dread to conceive. I may be speechless; already, or at least for a month or so, I'm little better than a teetoller—I beg pardon, a tee-totaller. It is not exactly physical, for I am in good health, working four or five hours a day in my plantation, and intending to ride a paper chase next Sunday—ay, man, that's a fact, and I havena had the hert to breathe it to my mother yet—the obligation 's poleetical, for I am trying every means to live well with my German neighbours—and, O Barrie, but it's no easy! To be sure, there are many exceptions. And the whole of the above must be regarded as private—strictly private. Breathe it not in Kirriemuir: tell it not to the daughters of Dundee! What a nice extract this would make for the daily papers! and how it would facilitate my position here! . . .

August 5th.

This is Sunday, the Lord's Day. "The hour of attack

[1] *Sentimental Tommy*: whose chief likeness to R. L. S. was meant to be in the literary temperament and passion for the *mot propre*.

approaches." And it is a singular consideration what I risk; I may yet be the subject of a tract, and a good tract too—such as one which I remember reading with recreant awe and rising hair in my youth, of a boy who was a very good boy, and went to Sunday Schule, and one day kipped from it, and went and actually bathed, and was dashed over a waterfall, and he was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. A dangerous trade, that, and one that I have to practise. I'll put in a word when I get home again, to tell you whether I'm killed or not. "Accident in the (Paper) Hunting Field: death of a notorious author. We deeply regret to announce the death of the most unpopular man in Samoa, who broke his neck at the descent of Magagi, from the misconduct of his little raving lunatic of an old beast of a pony. It is proposed to commemorate the incident by the erection of a suitable pile. The design (by our local architect, Mr. Walker) is highly artificial, with a rich and voluminous Crockett at each corner, a small but impervious Barrièer at the entrance, an arch at the top, an Archer of a pleasing but solid character at the bottom; the colour will be genuine William-Black; and Lang, lang may the ladies sit wi' their fans in their hands." Well, well, they may sit as they sat for me, and little they'll reck, the ungrateful jauds! Muckle they cared about Tusitala when they had him! But now ye can see the difference; now, leddies, ye can repent, when ower late, o' your former cauldness and what ye'll perhaps allow me to ca' your *tepeedity!* He was beautiful as the day, but his day is done! And perhaps, as he was maybe gettin' a wee thing fly-blawn, it's nane too shünc.

Monday, August 6th.

Well, sir, I have escaped the dangerous conjunction of the widow's only son and the Sabbath Day. We had a

most enjoyable time, and Lloyd and I were 3 and 4 to arrive; I will not tell here what interval had elapsed between our arrival and the arrival of 1 and 2; the question, sir, is otiose and malign; it deserves, it shall have no answer. And now without further delay to the main purpose of this hasty note. We received and we have already in fact distributed the gorgeous fahbrics of Kirriemuir. Whether from the splendour of the robes themselves, or from the direct nature of the compliments with which you had directed us to accompany the presentations, one young lady blushed as she received the proofs of your munificence. . . . Bad ink, and the dregs of it at that, but the heart in the right place. Still very cordially interested in my Barrie and wishing him well through his sickness, which is of the body, and long defended from mine, which is of the head, and by the impolite might be described as idiocy. The whole head is useless, and the whole sitting part painful: reason, the recent Paper Chase.

> "There was racing and chasing in Vailile plantation,
> And vastly we enjoyed it,
> But, alas! for the state of my foundation,
> For it wholly has destroyed it."

Come, my mind is looking up. The above is wholly impromptu.—On oath, TUSITALA.

August 12, 1894.

And here, Mr. Barrie, is news with a vengeance. Mother Hubbard's dog is well again—what did I tell you? Pleurisy, pneumonia, and all that kind of truck is quite unavailing against a Scotchman who can write—and not only that, but it appears the perfidious dog is married. This incident, so far as I remember, is omitted from the original epic—

"She went to the graveyard
To see him get buried,
And when she came back
The Deil had got merried."

It now remains to inform you that I have taken what we call here "German offence" at not receiving cards, and that the only reparation I will accept is that Mrs. Barrie shall incontinently upon the receipt of this Take and Bring you to Vailima in order to apologise and be pardoned for this offence. The commentary of Tamaitai upon the event was brief but pregnant: "Well, it's a comfort our guest-room is furnished for two."

This letter, about nothing, has already endured too long. I shall just present the family to Mrs. Barrie—Tamaitai, Tamaitai Matua, Teuila, Palema, Loia, and with an extra low bow, Yours,

TUSITALA.

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